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REFLECTIONS
UPON THE
CONDUCT
OF
Human Life:

With reference to the Study of
Learning and *Knowledge*.

In a Letter to the Excellent
Lady, the Lady *Masham*.

By *John Norris*, M. A. Rector of *Newton St. Loe*, in *Somersetshire*, near *Bath*; and late Fellow of *All Souls* College in *Oxford*.

To which is annex'd, a
Visitation SERMON,
By the same Author.

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REFLECTIONS
ON THE
CONDUCT
OF
HUMAN LIFE.

MADAM,

THE *Affliction your* Ladyſhip *is under for the loſs of your Sight is ſo* great, *and your Complaints upon that occaſion ſo* juſt, *that I can neither blame you for the one, nor excuſe my ſelf from pittying you for the other. And indeed ſince you have been ſo unhappy as to be deprived of the uſe of your Eyes, I think I owe your* Ladyſhip *ſo much Compaſſion, that I cannot better employ* mine, *than in writing you ſuch a*

Conſolation, *as the opportunity of my New Retirement, with the ſerious Reflections I have lately made in it, will ſuggeſt.*

And that I believe will be ſuch, *as is more peculiarly adapted to the* Circumſtance *of your trouble, which tho occaſion'd by a* Common *Accident, yet, I find, proceeds upon an* Uncommon *Principle. For tho 'tis to be preſumed that, notwithſtanding your great Contempt of the World, it muſt be a conſiderable part of your Affliction to loſe the Sight of ſome delectable Objects in it, ſince the Wiſeſt of Men (from whom your Ladyſhip cannot much diſſent)*

after

after a cenſure of vanity paſt upon all things under Heaven, is yet forc'd to confeſs that truly the Light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun; *yet I perceive the chief reaſon why your Ladyſhip is ſo concern'd for the loſs of your Sight, is becauſe you are thereby deprived of Converſation with your Books, and conſequently retarded in your earneſt purſuit after Learning and Knowledge.* Eccleſ. 11.7.

'Tis upon this hinge *I know that the main* weight *of your Sorrow* turns, *and therefore you will not want a* Specific *proper for your Malady, if you ſhould chance*

to be convinced that our Learning is generally misplaced, and that such an importunate pursuit after Learning and Knowledge is no way agreeable to the present Station and condition of Man. For certainly you will no longer lament the loss of your Eyes, for disabling you from doing that, which perhaps would not be adviseable for you to do, if you had them again. If therefore you once come to be convinc'd of this, one main ground of your discontent is removed; and that you may, is the design of the following Reflections.

The

The First Reflection.

Wherein the general Conduct of Human Life is tax'd, for placing Learning and Knowledge, in such things as are little or nothing perfective of the understanding.

I.

BEING Naturally more than ordinarily disposed to *Thoughtfulness*, and from the circumstances of my present Solitude and Retirement further invited to it; I began one day to fall into a deep Meditation upon the Conduct of *my own*, and of *Humane* Life. What Reflections I made upon my

my *own*, are too peculiarly Calculated for my proper Circumſtances, to be of any General uſe, and therefore I ſhall not trouble you with them. But as for thoſe paſt upon the conduct of *Humane Life*, I think they are of too general uſe, and withal of too Weighty Conſequence, not to be Communicated. Theſe therefore I ſhall think worth while to draw up into a little more orderly form than wherein they were firſt conceived, and preſent to your *Ladyſhips* Conſideration.

II.

Firſt then I conſider that the Conduct of Human Life muſt be to the *End* of Human Life, which is the ſame with the End of *Man*, which is *Happineſs*. This conduct therefore muſt be and and neceſſarily is, in *Groſs* to *Happineſs*. But now whereas there are two Faculties or Powers of Man, by the right ordering of which this Happineſs is to be attain'd, *Underſtanding*

ſtanding and *Will*, therefore more immediately and diſtinctly, this Conduct of Human Life is in order to the Government and exerciſe of theſe two Faculties, the due Regulation of which is the *Immediate End*, to which Human Life is to be Conducted. There is therefore a double conduct of Human Life, *Intellectual* and *Moral*.

III.

As to the *Moral Conduct* of Human Life, I do not intend at preſent to ſpend any Reflections upon it. Not becauſe 'tis Unexceptionable, but becauſe 'tis too Obnoxious, the general Impertinence and Irregularity of it being too open and expoſed, to need any. And beſides 'tis a *Butt*, that has been Shot at ſo often, ever ſince *Preaching* and *Writing* has been in the World, that 'tis now ſo thick-ſet with holes, that there is ſcarce room left to faſten a *new* Arrow in it.

IV.

IV.

But tho the *Moral Conduct* of Human Life ſtands ſo much in the way, and has been ſo much reflected upon, yet it has fared otherwiſe with that which is here call'd *Intellectual*, which ſtands not ſo *fair* a *Mark*, nor has been ſo often *hit*. Not that 'tis really leſs faulty (for perhaps we ſhall be found to be as much out in the Conduct of our *underſtandings* as in that of our *wills*) but becauſe its faultineſs is leſs *Notorious*, and lies further in, and muſt be drawn forth into view by a Chain of Conſequences, which not over many have either *diſcernment* enough to *make*, or *Patience* enough to *attend to*.

V.

This is the Reaſon why *this* part of Human Conduct has hitherto ſcaped ſo well the Cenſure and Animadverſion not only of the vulgar, but of the Maſters of Reaſon, who have generally emptied

emptied their Quivers upon the *Moral* part; and this is the Reaſon why I am not willing it ſhould eſcape *Now*. And I think a good Reaſon too, ſince next to the *Greatneſs* of an Irregularity, nothing renders it ſo fit for Reflection, as its *Privacy* and *Retirement*.

VI.

The Subject therefore of the preſent Reflections is the *Intellectual Conduct* of Human Life, or as I expreſs it in the Title, the Conduct of Human Life with reference to the Study of Learning and Knowledge. It is here ſuppoſed that this Conduct is *faulty* and *irregular*, in its being made the Subject of *Reflection*. What its Faults and Irregularities are, I ſhall ſhew by ranging them into theſe three orders, with reference to the *End*, *Means*, and *Degree* of *Affection*.

1. The placing of Learning and Knowledge in ſuch things as are little or nothing Perfective of the Underſtanding. 2. The

2. The undue and irregular method of profecuting what is really Perfective of it.

3. The too Importunate and over-earneſt purſuit after Knowledge in General.

Theſe are the three *Cardinal Irregularities*, I have obſerv'd in the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life, and upon each of theſe I ſhall beſtow a *Reflection*.

VII.

The buſineſs of this firſt Reflection ſhall be to Tax the General Conduct of Human Life, for placing Learning and Knowledge, in ſuch things as are little or nothing Perfective of the underſtanding. This I confeſs to be a Charge of more than ordinary Severity and Boldneſs; becauſe it faſtens an Imputation of Folly upon the *Learned Order* (for with them only is my preſent Concern) and not only ſo, but alſo in *that* very thing wherein they think their Wiſdom and Intellectual accompliſhment

compliſhment conſiſts, and upon which they value themſelves above the reſt of Mankind. To queſtion their Conduct in any thing elſe, would be but a trivial Charge, and ſuch as they would not only readily *Pardon*, but *Acknowledge*; it being a common thing with Learned Men not only to *own*, but ſtudiouſly to *affect* Ignorance in things beſides their Profeſſion, as in Secular buſineſs, the common Affairs of Life, the Myſteries of Trades and the like. But to cenſure them as defective in that one thing they pretend to, to make that their *Blind-ſide* where they think they ſee cleareſt; to maintain that they are not only not really wiſe and knowing, but that generally they don't ſo much as know what true Knowledge is, and that they generally place it in ſuch things as contribute little or nothing to the Perfection of that, whereby they *really* excel the *Brutes*, and would

would be *thought* to excel the *Common ſort* of *Men*; this is ſo high, and ſo diſobliging a charge, that I fear thoſe who from the force of what ſhall be here urg'd, may be *convinc'd* of the *Truth* of it, will hardly *forgive* the *Boldneſs* of it.

VIII.

But as high a charge as it is, I queſtion not but that it may be, and will be here made good. And that it may appear to be true, we will firſt of all by way of *Addreſs* or *Preparation*, conſider what antecedent grounds of probability there are, that men ſhould generally place Learning and Knowledge in ſuch things as are little or nothing perfective of the *rational Part*; and then in the ſecond place we will proceed directly to prove that they do ſo.

IX.

As to the firſt, your *Ladyſhip* cannot be ſo little acquainted either with *hidden Springs*, or *outward Workings* of humane Nature, as not to

to have obſerv'd that however ſtrong and uuiverſal is the deſire of Knowledge, yet men are generally more in Love with the *Fame* and *Reputation* of it, than with the *thing* it ſelf. There are indeed here and there a few *humble retired* Souls that are otherwiſe diſpoſed, and like your *Ladyſhip* are ſo far from loving the Fame and Credit of knowledge *before* knowledge it ſelf, that they don't love it at *all*, but are content to court Wiſdom privately, and enjoy their own *Light* in the *Dark*. "For it may "be they conſider that be their "Attainments what they will, "Fame is a thing of infinite un- "certainty and contingency, that "it depends more upon the Hu- "mours of men, or ſome more "ſecret unaccountable *Fate*, than "upon real excellency and merit, "that ſome have the luck to be "popular and cry'd up for no- "thing, when in the mean while "others that are really and highly

" deſerving can ſcarce keep their
" Heads above *Contempt*; that the
" World is ſeldom juſt to true
" Merit, and that nothing is
" weigh'd in a falſer Ballance than
" real excellency, whether Moral
" or Intellectual; and that there
" is little reaſon to expect it ſhould
" ever be otherwiſe as long as *Envy*
" and *Ignorance* hold the *Scales*.
" Then again it may be they con-
" ſider with themſelves, that ſup-
" poſe true worth were ſecure of
" Reputation, yet what a poor
" ſlender good is it! For what
" is it to be *talk'd of*, or *pointed*
" *at*? Should a Man be never ſo
" Popular the *Antipodes* will never
" hear of him, or if they do,
" what is he the *better* for what is
" ſaid of him *there*? And ſhould
" his Fame, like the Sun, Travael
" round the whole Globe, beſides
" that he is but Maſter of a Point
" when he has All, he can enjoy
" no more of it but juſt what he
" *hears*, which is inconſiderable.

" And

" And yet as inconſiderable as it " is, 'tis like to be his whole Portion. For as for *Poſthumous* Glory, " it comes too late to be any " thing valuable. He will either " not be ſenſible of it, or deſpiſe " it. For certainly it muſt needs " be mightily beneath the improvements of a ſeparate ſtate " to put any value upon the injudicious praiſes of poor Mortals " here below. Or ſuppoſe that a " Deceas'd Spirit could take any " delight in reflecting upon the " Fame he has left behind him, " yet 'tis to be conſidered that *the* " *Faſhion of this world paſſes away*, " that thoſe in whoſe praiſes he " outlives himſelf, muſt alſo ſhortly " dye, and that then his *Fame* will " have a Funeral, as well as *him-* " *ſelf*. Theſe perhaps, or ſuch like Conſiderations, may prevail with your *Ladyſhip* and a few more *thinking* Perſons, to have but a very cold and indifferent regard for the Reputation of Learning

and Knowledge: But as for the generality of mankind it must be own'd that they are fond of it to a strange degree, and are more concern'd to be accounted Wise and Learned, than really to be so. Otherwise I question whether our *Libraries* would be so full as they are.

X.

But now, tho the generality of men be so passionately and keenly set upon the *fame* of being Learned and Knowing, yet (so little hath Nature design'd to gratify this ambitious humour) there are but a very few that have either a Genius and inclination for *Learning it self*, or a capacity of attaining to it. Not an *Inclination*, because there is a great variety in the *Speculative*, as well as *Moral* inclinations of men, one being naturally disposed to this sort of study, and another to that, whereas true Knowledge whatever it be (which shall be consider'd in its due place) is of one

one *determinate* kind or nature in general, and consequently must require a certain peculiar frame and disposition of mind. Not a *capacity*, because the generality of men are known to have but indifferent Intellectuals, suited to the exigencies of *common* life, when as true knowledge (what ever it be) must be supposed to be a thing of uncommon difficulty, and the study of it a work fit only for sublimer wits, the more elevated and *Awakerd* part of Mankind.

XI.

Now put these two things together, that almost all men would fain be thought Learned and Knowing, and that there is but here and there one that is Naturally made and fitted for true Knowledge, and then consider what is like to be the result of this Complication. Why, the Latter Few may succeed well in the search of what they were naturally qualified for, and having attain'd to a

Competency of true Knowledge, ſuch as is Perfective of the Underſtanding, they find themſelves under no *Temptation* to place it in any thing elſe, or to bring into Credit any other ſort of knowledge. Becauſe having arrived ſo far, they are either wiſe enough to *undervalue* the Fame of being Learned, or elſe deſpair not of attaining it by their Proficiency in *True Knowledge*. Here therefore they take up their reſt.

XII.

But now what ſhall we do with the *others*? Are they to be perſwaded that they are not of a *Make* for the Study and attainment of Learning? You'll find it tough work to convince them of that. But ſuppoſe it poſſible that they could be made ſenſible that they are not like to Commence very Learned and Knowing, yet all the World ſhall never be able to perſwade them to lay aſide that Natural itch of being

ſo

ſo accounted. But you'll ſay, tho this Inclination be too Natural and inbred to be quite *laid aſide*, yet there's hopes it may be *Govern'd.* No nor that neither. They muſt put in for the *Prize*, and 'tis in vain to diſſwade them from it. But they muſt deſpair of ever winning it in a *fair* way, being ſuppoſed not able to reach the Tree of Knowledge. True. They have therefore but one way left, and that is, to *turn the Tables*, and cry up ſomething or other for Learning which they are capable of. No matter whether it *deſerve* that name, that is, whether it be really perfective of the Rational Part or no, 'tis enough if they can *reach* it. For thoſe that can't compaſs *true* Riches, and yet will have the *Name* and credit of it, are put upon the Neceſſity of *Coyning* and *Counterfeiting.*

XIII.

And truly this Suppoſition ſeems to me ſo very reaſonable,

that were experience altogether *Silent* in the Caſe, and were I utterly unacquainted with the State of Learning in the World, yet if I had a Draught given me of Human Nature, and were told how much the Ambition of being eſteem'd as Learned and Knowing exceeds both the *Deſire* and the *Ability* to be ſo, and were then ask'd what I thought would be the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life, I ſhould without any further enquiry conclude that in all probability Men would generally place Learning and Knowledge in ſuch things as ſignifie little or nothing to the Perfection of the underſtanding.

XIV.

But from grounds of Probability that they ſhould do ſo, let us proceed to prove *directly* that they do ſo. Now in this Charge there is ſomething *ſuppoſed*, and ſomething *aſſerted*. The ſuppoſition is that there are ſome things, the

the knowledge of which is little or nothing Perfective of the underſtanding. The Aſſertion is, that Learning is generally placed in the knowledge of ſuch things. The Proof of the Suppoſition will ingage my Pen upon the diſcuſſion of a very *Curious* and *weighty Queſtion*, wherein the Perfection of the underſtanding does conſiſt, or what it is that is Perfective of the Underſtanding? Which when we have duly fix'd and ſtated, we ſhall then have a certain *Meaſure* to go by in the Proof of the *Aſſertion*.

XV.

To the Queſtion then I anſwer, that the Perfection of the Underſtanding, as that of the will, is either *Formal* or *Objective*. The *Formal Perfection* of the underſtanding, as that of the will, is no other than its Exercife or Operation, which is *Thinking* and *Perception*, as that of the other is *Willing* and *Chuſing*. According to the vulgar

vulgar Maxim, that *the Perfection of every thing is its Operation*, which must be understood only of the *Formal Peferction*. The *Objective Perfection* of the understanding is *Truth*, as that of the will is *Good*. The Result of these two Perfections joyn'd together, is what in the understanding we call *Knowledge*, and what in the will we call *Vertue*.

XVI.

Our concern is not at present with the *Formal*, but with the *Objective* Perfection of the understanding. This we have said in general to be Truth, as that of the will is Good. And thus far there is neither *Difficulty*, nor *Controverſie*. All therefore that further remains to be here conſiderd, is, what Truth that is which is the Objective Perfection of the underſtanding, or, what Truth that is, in the Knowledge of which the Perfection of the underſtanding does conſiſt,

XVII.

XVII.

Now since there is so great a Proportion and Correspondence between the understanding and the will, and the Perfection of each, the first entrance we shall make upon the Resolution of this Question shall be to consider, what good that is which is the Objective Perfection of the will, or, what good that is in the desiring and embracing of which the Perfection of the will does consist. Which being determin'd, will afford at least a *Fair Ground* and *Occasion*, tho not an *infallible Measure* for the determination of the other.

XVIII.

Here then 'twill be necessary to premise a Consideration of the Kinds of good. The most general distribution of which I conceive to be into these two, *Necessary* and *Contingent* good. By necessary good I understand that which cannot but be good, that which is always and immutably good. And this

this comprizes under it the good of the *End* which is desireable for it self, commonly called *Pleasant good*. And the good of the *Means*, which has an immutable connexion with it, and is desirable for the other, commonly call'd *Profitable Good*. By *Contingent* good I understand that which may, or may not be good, and is good, whenever it is so, only upon a *Positive* account, because enjoyn'd by the Will of a Competent Authority. This can never be the good of the *End*, or a self-desirable Good; nor can it be *such* a good of the *Means* as has a *Natural* and *immutable* connexion with it; but is always an Arbitrary and Mutable *Means*.

XIX.

This being briefly premised, I shall venture to assert that that good which is the Objective Perfection of the Will is *Necessary Good*. Either that which is *Self-desirable*, as God the Universal, or any

any other particular pleaſant good. Or elſe that which has an *immutable Connexion* with it, as Moral good. As for Contingent good, that is no otherwiſe perfective of the Will, than in the force and vertue of the neceſſary good. For Obedience to a poſitive Law is no otherwiſe a Vertue, than as 'tis included in ſome general natural Law, whereof 'tis a contingent inſtance. Which is alſo the ground commonly aſſign'd by *Caſuiſts*, why Human Laws oblige in Conſcience. According to that of *Aquinas*, Lex Humana Obligat in Conſcientia, quatenus participat legem æternam & Naturalem. *An Human Law obliges in Conſcience as much as it partakes of the Eternal and Natural Law.* That is, as far as it is founded, or relies upon the immutable will of God and the Dictate of Natural Reaſon.

XX.

This is too plain to *need* much Proof, though not ſo plain but that

that it *may* be demonſtrated. If then a Reaſon be demanded why the objective Perfection of the Will is only neceſſary, not contingent good, 'twill be ſufficient to ſay, that that only is Perfective of the Will, which naturally, and of it ſelf, makes it *Happy*, and wherein ſhe can *acquieſce* with ſatisfaction and delight. But this is only neceſſary good, that which is eſſentially, intrinſically, and immutably good, either as the *End*, or as having a *Natural Connexion* with it, either of which involves Happineſs. As for contingent good, that is ſuppoſed to be of it ſelf indifferent as to Happineſs, and tho by poſitive Ordination it may be made a condition of it, yet ſtill it contributes to it only as an *Arbitrary Means*, which has no inward goodneſs in it ſelf, and whoſe whole Moral Excellency is deriv'd from ſome general Law of Reaſon, whereof 'tis an inſtance by accident, and in vertue where-

of

of it obliges. Thus *Moſes*'s ſtriking the Rock, had nothing morally good or perfective of the Will in it, but only as 'twas an Inſtance of that *General Law* of obeying the Divine Will in all things. Nor did the Vertue of *Moſes* conſiſt, properly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, in *ſtriking* the Rock, but in *Obeying* God *by* ſtriking the Rock. Exod. 17. 6.

XXI.

By this it appears what good that is, in the deſiring and embracing of which the Moral Perfection of the Will does properly and ultimately conſiſt. That it is *Neceſſary*, not *Contingent* good. Whence we may take inſtruction how to ſtate the Perfection of the underſtanding, which we ſhall do by following the ſame Common Meaſure. Firſt then be it here alſo premiſed, that as in relation to the Will, all *good* is either *Neceſſary* or *Contingent*, ſo in relation to the Underſtanding, all *Truth* is either *Neceſſary* or *Contingent*. For beſides

ſides the immediateneſs of the Oppoſition, which is Contradictory, I further conſider, that that muſt be the Adæquate diviſion of *Truth* which is of *Being*, Truth being a property of Being, and ſuch a one, as tho formally and Abſtractly different (for the ſubject muſt never be included in the Preciſe Reaſon of the Property) is yet Materially, and Concretely the ſame with it. But now Neceſſary and Contingent is the Adequate Diviſion of *Being*, therefore alſo of *Truth*.

XXII.

By Neceſſary Truth I underſtand that which cannot but be True, that which is always and immutably True. Such is God among *Simple Truths*, who is immutably what he is, and all the *Divine Ideas* which (as I have elſewhere abundantly explain'd it) are the very Eſſence of God, as variouſly imitable or participable, thus or thus. Such alſo among *Complex Truths*

Vid. Reaſon and Religion. Pag. 82.

Truths are all Propoſitions of Eternal Truth, whether Abſolute or Hypothetical, with all their regular Inferences and Concluſions, which (as I have alſo elſewhere ſhewn) are nothing elſe but the *Divine Ideas* themſelves as they reſpect each other according to their ſeveral immutable Habitudes and Combinations. *Vid. the ſame Treatiſe. Pag.* 203.

XXIII.

By Contingent Truth I underſtand that which may or may not be True, that whoſe Truth depends not upon the *Eſſence* of God. (That *Ground* and *Pillar* of all *Neceſſary* Truth) but only upon his *Meer Will* and free Pleaſure, either decreeing or permitting. Such among *Simple Truths* are all Created Beings, the whole *Ectypal* World, and all things in it, which tho made according to the Eternal and Immutable Patterns of the Divine Ideas or *Archetypal* World, yet in themſelves are Temporary and *Mutable*. Such alſo among

Complex Truths are all those Propositions the Terms of which have no Essential or Immutable Connexion with each other, but are so and so combined and related, meerly by the Decree or Permission of him, who is the Author of whatever is besides himself.

XXIV.

Under the First order of Truths are comprehended all those things which are the Matter of those *Arts* and *Sciences* which are built upon Stable and immoveable Foundations, which depend not upon the System of the Present World, but were antecedent to it, and might have been study'd before 'twas made, and according to which the World it self was made, such as *Theology*, *Metaphysics*, *Morality*, *Geometry*, &c. together with all those unchangeable Rules and Measures of Reason and Consequence which are to be used about them all, which is the Subject of that Art or Science we call *Logic*.

Logic. Under the ſecond order are comprehended all *Matters* of *Fact*, all *Temporary Events*, all *Natural* or *Artificial Effects*, &c. Which are the Matter of all Arbitrary and Mutable Sciences; as *Hiſtory*, *Chronology*, *Knowledge* of *Tongues*, &c. Which began with this *Mundan Syſtem*, and ſtand or fall with it.

XXV.

Now as that *good* which is Primely and properly Perfective of the Will is *Neceſſary good*, ſo following the ſame Proportion I ſhall not doubt to aſſert, that that *Truth* which is Primely and Properly Perfective of the Underſtanding is alſo *Neceſſary Truth*. And as *Contingent good* is no otherwiſe Perfective of the Will, than in the Force and Vertue of the *Neceſſary good* (as was above Explained) ſo likewiſe Contingent Truth, is no otherwiſe Perfective of the underſtanding than in the Force and Vertue of Neceſſary

Truth, that is, of the *Divine Ideas* wherein 'tis contain'd. As for Example, when I Speculate ſome Particular Artificial Triangle which is a Contingent Simple Truth, it is no otherwiſe Perſective of my Underſtanding than as it is beheld in its Neceſſary and Immutable Nature, or (which is all one) in the *Divine Idea.* And thus again when I form a *Propoſition* concerning this Triangle, by aſcribing to it ſome Property or other, which is a Contingent Complex Truth, this again is no otherwiſe Perſective of my Underſtanding than as it belongs to, and is beheld in the Nature of a Triangle in *Common*, which is Neceſſary and Immutable, being no other than an Idea, or a *Determinate Mode* of the *Divine Omniformity.* So that at length the Perfection of the underſtanding is reſolv'd into the Knowledge of Neceſſary Truth, which is its only Objective Perfection; that which

which is Contingent being no way perfective of it, but only in vertue of the other.

XXVI.

I am (*Madam*) very ſenſible how ſtrange and Paradoxical this way of Philoſophizing will ſeem to thoſe who are either unaddicted to Meditation in general, or not converſant in Theories of this kind, and therefore for *their ſakes*, rather than for any *inevidence* of the *Argument*, I will give ſome Proof and Confirmation of it, which I will ſo order, that it ſhall be an *Explanation* at the ſame time. I will therefore firſt ſhew that *'tis* ſo, and ſecondly, *how* and *why* 'tis ſo. That it is ſo I prove thus: Firſt, I ſuppoſe that God was once when there was nothing beſides God. Again, I ſuppoſe that as the Being of God did go before all other being in Order of *time*, ſo in Order of *Nature* it was antecedent even to the Will of Creating, putting, or permitting any thing.

thing. Again, I ſuppoſe that there was therefore then no other Truth but neceſſary Truth, that is, the Divine Ideas with their ſeveral Habitudes and Complications. I ſuppoſe again, that therefore God muſt be *conſider'd* as knowing then only theſe *neceſſary Truths*. And yet I ſuppoſe again, that God was as perfect then as he is now; and conſequently, that the Divine *Underſtanding* was as perfect then as now, the Nature of God requiring not only that he ſhould be *Abſolutely Perfect*, but that he ſhould be ſo in *himſelf*. Whence I infer, that therefore the whole Perfection of the Divine Underſtanding is to be reſolv'd into the ſole knowledge of *Neceſſary Truths*, and that the knowledge of *Contingent Truth* gives no Perfection to it, any otherwiſe than as 'tis beheld in that which is neceſſary, as was ſaid before.

XXVII.

From this Proceſs of Reaſoning,

I preſume 'tis ſufficiently evident, that the Objective Perfection of the *Divine Underſtanding* is only *Neceſſary Truth*, which I take in the firſt place to be a ſtrong ground of preſumption, that the Perfection of *Human Underſtanding* does alſo conſiſt in the ſame. But to make it further plain that it does ſo, I ſuppoſe again, that nothing were to exiſt but only God, and one Intelligent Being; and that this Intelligent Being had the full and perfect fruition of God. Upon this ſuppoſition I enquire, whether this Intelligent Being would be perfectly Happy or no? Without all queſtion he would, as enjoying an *All-ſufficient Good*. Well, if ſo, then he muſt be perfectly happy in his *Underſtanding*. And yet 'tis moſt certain, that he could then have the knowledge of very little more than *Neceſſary Truth*; for all that he could poſſibly know beſides, would be only that he himſelf did exiſt, and that he knew

theſe Neceſſary Truths, and that he was happy in the knowledge of them, and the like. And leſt the knowledge of ſuch Contingencies ſhould be thought any Accumulation to his Happineſs, we will carry our Hypotheſis a little further, by ſuppoſing that this Intelligent Being were not to *attend* to any of his own Perfections, or to any of thoſe few Contingent Truths reſulting from them, but were only to Contemplate God and the Divine Ideas; and then I demand whether his underſtanding would be ſufficiently perfected or no? 'Tis neceſſary to anſwer in the Affirmative, whence 'tis alſo as neceſſary to conclude, that the only Objective Perfection of our underſtanding is *Neceſſary Truth.*

XXVIII.

This I think ſufficient to prove that *'tis ſo.* I ſhall now briefly explain the *Mode* of it, by ſhewing *how* and *why* 'tis ſo; and I account for it after this manner.

Neceſſary

Neceſſary Truth is the ſame with the Divine Ideas; and accordingly *Plato*, I remember, calls Science a *Participation of Ideas*, and the Divine Ideas are the very Eſſence of God, as 'tis variouſly imitable according to its *Omniformity*: Neceſſary Truth therefore is no other than the Eſſence of God, the very *Subſtance* of the Divinity. More particularly, it is the ſame with the Divine λόγος, the ſecond Perſon in the Holy Triad, who is Ἡ ἀρχέτυπος σφραγὶς as *Philo* ſpeaks, *the Archetypal Seal*, and κόσμος νοητὸς *the Intellectual World*, and ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα *the Archetypal Paradigme*, and ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν, *the Idea of Ideas*. Whom alſo the Scripture repreſents as the *Wiſdom* of his *Father*, and as the *Light* of the *World*, and who inlightens every Man that comes into it, not only *Efficiently* (as 'tis vulgarly underſtood) but alſo *Formally*, he himſelf being *the Truth*, and *the Light*, in which we ſee all things.

περὶ κοσμοπ. p. 3.

XXIX.

XXIX.

Theſe things (*Madam*) I only hint to you, referring you for further ſatisfaction to your deſervedly admired Monſieur *Malebranche* in his *de la Recherche de la Verité*, and to a Treatiſe of mine call'd *Reaſon* and *Religion*; where I have purpoſely treated of the *Divine Ideas*, and of our ſeeing all things in them: In which however whatever is deficient ſhall be ſupplied in another *Latin* Treatiſe of a larger compaſs, now under my hands, and which I ſhall communicate to the World e're long (if God pleaſe to continue my Life and Health) under the Title of *Theoria Mundi Idealis, ſive Metaphyſica Platonica.*

XXX.

However, leſt I ſhould be thought to proceed upon a precarious ground, I will here give you one ſhort and evident Demonſtration that Neceſſary Truth is the very Eſſence of God, and then advance. That God is the cauſe of

of whatever is beſides himſelf, or that whatever is, is either God or the effect of God, is a clear and acknowledg'd principle. Upon which I thus argue: Neceſſary Truth is either God, or the Effect of God. But it is not the Effect of God, therefore it is no other than God himſelf.

XXXI.

That it is not the Effect of God, is evident from the many Abſurdities that would follow upon that Suppoſition. For firſt, God would be then a *Neceſſary Agent*; for if Neceſſary Truth be an *Effect*, 'tis a *Neceſſary* Effect, and a Neceſſary Effect muſt have a Neceſſary Cauſe. Again, God would not only be a *Neceſſary* Agent, but alſo (which is worſe) an *Unintelligent* Agent. The conſequence is unavoidable, for if Truth be the Effect of God, then antecedently to the effecting of it, there was no Truth, and conſequently no *Knowledge*. Again, if Neceſſary Truth be the Effect

of

of God, then the Perfection of the Divine Underſtanding muſt be ſuppoſed to depend upon ſomething that is not God; nay, upon ſomething Created *by* God. 'Twill follow again, that God has made ſomething which he cannot deſtroy. And laſtly, to add no more, if Neceſſary Truth be the Effect of God, then there will be ſomething *Neceſſary*, Immutable, and Eternal, &c. beſides God. The *Conſequences* are all *plain*, and ſo are the *Abſurdities*. The laſt of which appeared ſo great to the Excellent *Monſieur Poiret*, a ſtiff Oppoſer of your beloved *Malebranche*, and of the *Ideal Philoſophy*, that he urges this as one Argument againſt the very *being* of Neceſſary Truth, becauſe then there would be ſomething *Neceſſary* beſides God, not conſidering that this Neceſſary Truth is really one and the ſame with God himſelf. And this alone puts by the force of his Argument againſt the

Cogitationes Rationales de Deo p. 296.

being

being of Neceſſary Truth, which however is ſufficiently concluſive to the purpoſe we now aim at, that Neceſſary Truth is not the *Effect* of God. For if it were, then his Abſurdity would come in, and there would be ſomething Neceſſary beſides God. Since then Neceſſary Truth is not the Effect of God, it remains by Vertue of the *premiſed Disjunction*, that it muſt be no other than the very Subſtance and Eſſence of the Deity.

XXXII.

I further conſider, that the Eſſence of God is intimately and immediately united to the mind of Man; this is plain from *Scripture*, which tells us that in God is our *Life*, our *Motion*, and our *Being*. And from *Philoſophy*, which aſſures us, that what pervades all things, muſt needs be immediately united with every thing. And for this, you have the Authority of your excellent *Malebranche*, who therefore

De la Recherche de la verité p. 208.

fore calls God the *Place* of *Spirits*, as Space is the Place of *Bodies*.

XXXIII.

Now upon these two Suppositions, that Necessary Truth is the same with God himself, and that the Essence of God is immediately united to the Mind of Man, 'tis easie to Conceive *how* and *why* Necessary Truth should be the Objective Perfection of our Understanding; since to make an Object Perfective of the *Faculty*, nothing else is requisite, than that it be its *proper Good*, and that it be *intimately Present* to it. And this will also sufficiently give us to understand that *Contingent Truth* cannot be the *Objective* Perfection of the Mind; first, because *that* is a Created Being, whereas God alone is our proper Good. And secondly, because 'tis *without* us, and cannot be immediately united to our minds, without which condition, were it never so *Perfective* otherwise, it could contribute nothing

nothing to the *Perfection* of our Understandings.

XXXIV.

And thus have I given a full Resolution to that Curious and Important Question which the Proof of my Supposition ingaged me upon, and which is to be the Measure of what follows in this Reflection. It is plain from hence, that there are some things the Knowledge whereof is little or nothing perfective of the understanding. For as I have shewn, 'tis not *Contingent* but *Necessary* Truth, wherein the Perfection of the Understanding does consist. Whence it follows that True Learning ought to be placed in the Knowledge of *Necessary Truth*, in the Comprehension of those Arts and Sciences whose Foundations are not Arbitrary, but Stable and Immutable, and in understanding the Eternal and Unchangeable Laws and Measures of *Reason* and *Consequence*. He therefore is the truly

truly Learned and Knowing Man, who has furniſh'd his Mind with bright and clear Ideas, lodg'd them orderly and regularly in his Head, and ſettled the Relations and Conſequences of one to another. He that is able to think clearly and diſtinctly (for ſo much a Man knows, as he diſtinctly underſtands, and no more) to judge truly and ſolidly, and to reaſon dependently and conſequentially. In ſhort, he that ſees moſt of the *Divine Ideas*, is moſt familiarly converſant in the Intelligible World, and has the largeſt and the cleareſt view of the *Field* of *Truth*. This I hold to be Learning, and Intellectual Perfection, and beſides what Arguments I have alledged in behalf of this Hypotheſis; it is further Confirmed by the Authority of *Plato*, when he makes the *Happineſs* or *Perfection* of Man (for 'tis all one) to conſiſt in the *Contemplation* of *Ideas*.

XXXV.

XXXV.

But notwithſtanding the unqueſtionable Certainty of the Premiſes, this is not that Meaſure which the generality of the World has thought fit to proceed by. Learning is generally placed in the Knowledge of *Contingent*, not of *Neceſſary* Truth. For your *Ladyſhip* very well Knows that the World does not eſteem him a Learned Man whoſe Learning has *Clear'd* his underſtanding, who is arrived to clearneſs and Diſtinctneſs of Conception, and is a thorough Maſter of *Notion* and *Diſcourſe*. No, 'twill coſt great Pains, great Labour of Mind, and anxiety of Thinking to arrive to *this Pitch*. Nor will all the Pains in the World do, unleſs a Man be Naturally *made* for it, unleſs he be of a *Notional Complexion*, and has had his Head caſt in a *Metaphyſical Mould*. Whereupon this Attainment is like to be the Lot of a very Few. This therefore

must not be *Learning*, but something else must, that lies more within *Common reach*, tho of no real Moment to the Perfection of the understanding. Such (as I have shewn) are *Contingent Truths*, and yet Learning is generally placed in the Knowledge of these.

XXXVI.

For first, 'tis reckon'd a notable point of Learning to understand variety of *Languages*. This alone gives a Man a Title to Learning without one Grain of Sense; and on the other side, let a Man be an *Angel* for *Notion* and *Discourse*, yet unless he can express the same thoughts in variety of words, he may go for a *Rational*, but will by no means be esteem'd a *Learned Man*. And this brings to my mind a Passage which I met with not long since in *London*, where being in Company with an Ingenious *French* Man, I ask't him of what repute *M. Malebranche* was with the

the *Learned* in *France*? He told me, that he was look'd upon as a great Maſter of Notion and Speculation, but as a Man of no great Learning. I ask'd him, why? Becauſe, ſaid he, he underſtands but few Languages. How much that excellent Authors Talent may lie that way I am not concern'd. But whatever it be, the moſt *Learned* of them all muſt give me leave to ſay, that I would rather be Maſter of a Quarter of his Senſe, than of all the Languages that may be form'd out of the *Alphabet*. But is it not a ſtrange thing that ſo much *Streſs* ſhould be laid upon ſuch a *Trifle*? For what am I the better for being able to tell what 'tis a Clock in ſeveral Languages? What does this ſignifie to the Perfection of my underſtanding? Words are purely in order to *Thought* and *Senſe*, and therefore are of no further value than as they ſerve as helps either to *Learn*, or to *Communicate* the other. To

affect them therefore for *themſelves*, is to turn the *Means* into the *End*, than which nothing is more abſurd. And yet this vain peice of *Pedantry* has prevail'd all the World over, and with ſome to that degree, that they have confounded *Ideas* with *Words*, and have made all *Science* to terminate in the latter. Thus the Philoſophers of the *Nominal way*, and particularly Mr. *Hobbs* who makes Reaſon to be nothing elſe but *Sequela Nominum, a well order'd Train of Words.* Never certainly was there a groſſer peice of Idolatry, nor a plainer Argument of the great degeneracy of Mankind. And tho all the Multipliers of Tongues are not Comprehended under this latter charge, yet it may concern them to conſider, how great a Folly it muſt needs be, to place Learning in that, which is one of the greateſt *Curſes* upon *Earth*, and which ſhall utterly *Ceaſe* in *Heaven.*

1 Cor. 13. 8.

XXXVII. A-

XXXVII.

Again, it passes for an extraordinary part of Learning to understand *History*, that is, in other words, to know what a company of silly Creatures, call'd *Men*, have been doing for almost this 6000 years. Now what is my understanding the Perfecter for knowing this? I deny not but that there are some matters of Fact, as the more remarkable Turns of *Ecclesiastical History*, together with the greater revolutions of the *Civil* World, that may be of *Moment* to be known, not that the knowledge of them as such is *Learning*, or Perfective of the understanding, but because by discovering to us the Conduct of Divine Providence they supply us with occasions of adoring and glorifying the wisdom and goodness of God. I am not therefore against the *knowing* these things, but only I would not have men think themselves the *Wiser* or more *Learned* for such *Knowledge*.

For 'tis one thing to ſay that a thing *deſerves* to be known, and another to ſay that 'tis *Learning* or *Wiſdom* to know it. For a thing may *deſerve* to be known, not as *perfecting* the *underſtanding*, but meerly as *touching* upon our *Intereſt*. I grant therefore that it may be of *Conſequence* to know ſome Hiſtorical paſſages, if we are any way *concerned* in them, and ſo it may to know the Clock has ſtruck One, if I have appointed an *Aſſignation* at that time; but ſure the *bare naked Theory* of the Clock's having ſtruck one, can add but little to the ſtock of my Intellectual Perfection. The moſt *trivial* matter of Fact in the World is worth knowing, if I have any *concern* depending upon it; and the *greateſt* without *that* is utterly inſignificant. So that 'tis not from the *perfecting* of our *Underſtanding*, but from the *Relation* they have to our *Intereſt*, that theſe things deſerve to be known.

XXXVIII.

XXXVIII.

This is ſufficiently plain from the Meaſure we have premiſed, by which no Truth is perfective of the underſtanding but only *Neceſſary Truth*. But to addreſs my ſelf more Convincingly to the great Magnifiers of *Hiſtory*, I ſhall only deſire their anſwer to this one Queſtion. Suppoſe ſuch and ſuch Matters of Fact, on the knowledge of which they Found their title to Learning, and perhaps, glory more in the *knowing* them, than the *Actors* themſelves did in the *doing* them. Suppoſe, I ſay, ſuch matters of Fact had never been *done*; ſuppoſe *Fabius* had never Weather'd out *Hannibal* by *Delays*; nor *Cyrus* took *Babylon* by draining the River into the Ditches, what loſs or diminution would this have been to the Perfection of their Underſtandings? They cannot ſay it would have been any. And why then ſhould the knowing them now they *are* done, be reck-

on'd as an Intellectual Improvement? And yet we find that 'tis ſo, and that Men ſtudy theſe things not only for their *uſe* (for that I allow) but for their meer *Theory*, placing Learning in *ſuch* Hiſtory, which has nothing to commend it but only that it tells you ſuch and ſuch things were done. Of this impertinent ſort is the greateſt part of the *Roman* and *Grecian* Hiſtory, which (had not the World *Voted* it for *Learning*) would no more concern a Man to know, than that a Bird has dropt a feather upon the *Pyrenæan* Mountains.

XXXIX.

Again, it goes for a Notable piece of Learning to underſtand *Chronology*, to be able to adjuſt the intervals and diſtances of Time, to know when ſuch an Action was done, when ſuch a Famous Man flouriſh'd, and who and who were contemporary, and the like. Now I deny not, but that while Men live

live in this World, they may be *concern'd* to have ſome acquaintance with theſe things, by reaſon of ſome intereſt or other that depends upon it. It may therefore, I ſay, for ſome purpoſes, be convenient to know that. For inſtance, there is a twofold Æra (or date) of the Victory at *Actium*, the one reckon'd from the Fight at the Promontory of *Actium*, according to the account of *Dio* and *Xiphilinus*; the other from the taking of *Alexandria*, and the Death of *Cleopatra*, according to *Ptolemy*, *Joſephus*, *Euſebius*, and *Cenſorinus*. But however, *concerning* this may be, with reſpect to its *uſefulneſs*, yet certainly as to any *Intellectual Perfection* that accrues by it, it muſt needs be a very *unedifying Stuffage* of Mind; and yet 'tis counted a great Accompliſhment and *Enrichment* of it.

XL.

Another thing there is which paſſes for wonderful Learning, which

which I cannot well reduce either to *Neceſſary* or *Contingent* Truth, for indeed it does not belong to *Truth* at all, and that is our *Sophiſtical* way of Diſputation. And indeed it may well be call'd ſo, for as 'tis generally manag'd, 'tis nothing but meer Quibbling and Jeſting, not *Arguing* but *Punning*. For ſuppoſe the Queſtion be, Whether he that has Faith ſhall be ſaved? No ſays the Opponent, If the Damn'd have Faith, then not every one that has Faith ſhall be ſaved; But the Damn'd have Faith. Therefore, &c. Here 'tis plain that the Word *Faith*, tho it has *Something* in Common in both Propoſitions, yet according to the *intire Idea* ſignifies one thing in one Propoſition, and another in another. And why then is not the whole Proceedure to be rejected as Idle and Impertinent? As for *downright* Fallacy and Equivocation where there is a *Manifeſt* Ambiguity (as between

Dog

Dog and *Dog*, one ſignifying a Celeſtial Sign, and the other a Terreſtial Animal) this is every where deſpiſed and laught at as unbecoming both the *Acumen* and the *Gravity* of a Diſputant. And we think we have ſufficiently diſcharged our hands of ſuch an Argument, by Crying out that theſe are *Four Terms* in the *Syllogiſm*. But now I would fain know whether it be not the ſame to all real purpoſes in the foremention'd Inſtance, which is after the Common way of our *Scholaſtic* Diſputation? Is not *Faith* and *Faith there*, as much an Ambiguity as *Dog* and *Dog* here? For my part I can perceive but this only Difference, that *Dog* and *Dog* have nothing in Common but the *Name*, whereas *Faith* and *Faith* have ſome *Generical* Part wherein they agree. But what does this Mend the Matter? For tho there be ſome *Generical* Agreement, yet take 'em according to their *whole Ideas*,

Ideas, that is, take the *Generical* part with its *Contracting Difference*, and 'tis plain that they ſignifie two different things, and conſequently that there is really as great an Ambiguity *here* as *there*. And this we plainly Confeſs when we come to *Diſtinguiſh*. For what is a *Diſtinction* but a *Pointing* out of an *Ambiguity*? What is it elſe but to ſay, that ſuch a thing is True in *this* Senſe, but not in *that*, True in that Senſe wherein the *Point* of the Queſtion is *not concern'd*, but not in that wherein it *is*. No? why then, notwithſtanding the Generical Agreement the Procedure is as fallacious and Impertinent as when the *Queſtion* being about *Star-Dog*, the *Oppoſition* is about *Land-Dog*. And yet (ſuch is the inconſiſtency of Human Judgment) the one is counted *Trifling*, and the other *Serious Arguing*. Whereas indeed no Arguing can be ſo, but where the Terms of the Queſtion are firſt *Defined*

(as

(as is done in *Geometry*) and then always uſed according to the firſt *Stated* Senſe. All Diſputing any otherwiſe than ſo, muſt neceſſarily be nothing elſe but meer *Punning*, only much worſe than what is in common uſe, becauſe 'tis *Punning* when a Man Pretends to be *Serious*. And yet this is made a conſiderable Part of our Academical *Education* and *Learning*. And to this I add this further Remark, that 'tis reckon'd a notable Excellence to be able to *Spin* out an Argument to a great length, and he is counted the beſt Arguer that can thus *Pun* longeſt. Whereas indeed did a Man ſpeak to the *Purpoſe*, *Brevity* would be his greateſt Excellence.

XLI.

There are many other things which the unaccountable humour of the World has *turn'd up* for Learning, which *Ignorance* will never be the better for, and which *Wiſdom* does not *need*. Thus 'tis count-

counted Learning to have tumbled over a multitude of Books, especially if *great* ones, and *old* ones, and *obscure* ones, but most of all, if *Manuscripts*; the recovery of one of which is reckon'd so much added to the *Commonwealth of Learning*, as they call it. A *Well-read* Man signifies the very same as a *Learned* Man in most Mens *Dictionaries*, and by Well-read they dont mean one that has read *well*, that has clear'd and improv'd his understanding by his reading, but only one that has read a *great deal*, tho perhaps he has puzzled and confounded his Notions by doing so. Thus again it goes for Learning, to be acquainted with Mens *Opinions*, especially of the *Ancients*, to know what this or that Philosopher held, what this or that Author says, tho perhaps he says nothing but what is either *Absurd*, or *Obviously True*. Thus for instance, what can be more Absurd than that *Fancy* of *Empedocles*,

docles, that there are two *Semi-circles* compaſſing betwixt them the Earth, one whereof was compoſed of Fire, the other of Air, and that the former made the Day, and the latter Night? And yet to know this is *Learning*. And what again is more obviouſly true, than that *Grave* Doctrine of *Ariſtotle*, that *Privation* muſt go before the introduction of the *Form* in all Generation? And yet 'tis Learning to know that he taught thus, tho it be a thing ſo plain, and ſo *near* the *Surface*, that a Child can't miſs of it. To know the thing is nothing, becauſe ſo plain and eaſie, but to know that *Ariſtotle* held it, that's the Learning. Nay, to inſtance in a matter of greater difficulty, tho I know very well, and am able to demonſtrate the grounds of the *Atomical Philoſophy*, or the Motion of the Earth, or the Circulation of the Blood, yet I ſhall not be admitted into the Order of the Learned, unleſs I am

able

able to tell that *Moſcus* the *Phœnician* invented the firſt, and that *Democritus* and *Leucippus* afterwards improved it, and that the two latter owe their diſcovery to *Copernicus* and *Harvey*. So much more Learned an atchievement is it to know *Opinions* than things; and accordingly, thoſe are reckon'd the moſt Learned Authors, who have given the greateſt Specimens of this kind of Knowledge. Thus is *Picus Mirandula* more admired for the Examination he has made of the Doctrine of the *Pagans*, than any of *them* were for what they deliver'd; and *Plutarch* has got more Credit from the Hiſtory he gives of their Opinions, in the 2d Tome of his Works, than from any of his Rational and Moral Diſcourſes. And were he not accounted *Learned* for the *Former*, I queſtion whether the *Latter* (tho far more excellent than they are) would ever have given him that Title.

XLII.

Now (*Madam*) what an hard and unreaſonable impoſition is this, that tho I am able to *Think* and *Write* never ſo much like an Angel my ſelf, yet I muſt not be accounted a Man of *Learning*, unleſs I can tell what every whimſical Writer has ſaid before me! And how hard will this fall upon thoſe, whoſe lot is to breathe in the *laſt* Ages of the World, who muſt be accountable for all the Whims and Extravagancies of ſo many *Centuries*? And yet this is made ſo great a part of Learning, that theLearning of moſt Men lies in *Books* rather than in *Things*; and among Authors, where one writes upon *Things*, there are twenty that writes upon *Books*. Nay, ſome have carried this odd humour on ſo far, that 'tis thought Learning to know the very *Titles* of Books, and their ſeveral *Editions*, with the time and place, when and where they were *Printed*. And I have

met with ſeveral my ſelf, that have valued themſelves not a little upon this *Mechanical* faculty, tho they knew no more of what was in them, than they do of what is written in the *Rolls of Deſtiny*.

XLIII.

From this placing of Learning in the Knowledge of Books, proceeds that ridiculous Vanity of *Multiplying Quotations*, which is alſo reckon'd another piece of Learning, tho they are uſed ſo unſeaſonably and impertinently, that there can be no other end in them, but only to ſhew that the Anthor has *read* ſuch a Book. And yet 'tis no ſuch Convincing Evidence of that neither, it being neither *New* nor *Difficult*, for a Man that's *reſolv'd* upon it, to quote ſuch Authors as he never *Read* nor *Saw*. And were it not too *Odious*, as well as *Obvious* a Truth, I could name to your *Ladiſhip*, ſome of thoſe *Author-Mongers*, who yet paſs for Men of

of ſhrewd Learning, and vaſt Reading.

XLIV.

Theſe, and many other ſuch things (for 'twere endleſs to reckon up all) are by the Majority of the World Voted for Learning, and in theſe we ſpend our Education, our Study, and our Time, tho they are all of them *Contingent Truths*, that are not Perfective of the Underſtanding (nothing being ſo but only Neceſſary Truths, or the Divine Ideas, the Eternal λόγος, the *Word* and Wiſdom of the Father) and alſo *moſt* of them *impertinent* and *unconcerning* ones. So that in ſhort, the Charge of this Reflection amounts to thus much, That Learning is generally placed in the Knowledge of ſuch things, which neither the Intellectual *Perfection*, nor any other *Intereſt* of Man is concern'd to know.

The End of the Firſt Reflection.

The Second Reflection.

Wherein the General Conduct of Human Life is tax'd, for uſing undue and irregular Methods, in Proſecuting what is really Perfective of the Underſtanding.

I.

IN the preceding Reflection, the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life was cenſured for the general *Miſplacing* of Learning, for placing it in ſuch things as are not Perfective of the underſtanding. In the Preſent Reflection ſuppoſing it to be Free from that Fault, we ſhall conſider it as Chargeable with another,

another, namely, with an *undue* and *irregular Method of* profecuting what is really perfective of it. The Firſt was an Errour about the *End*; This Second is an Errour about the *Means*, which are the two hinges upon which all *Prudence*, and all *Imprudence* turns.

II.

That the Truth of this Charge may appear, we muſt here alſo propoſe a *Meaſure*, whereby we may proceed, as we did in the Former Reflection. And as there we took upon us to determine what that is which is *Objectively perfective* of the *Underſtanding*, ſo we muſt here conſider what is the *Right Method* of *Proſecuting* what is ſo. Which being ſtated will be a Meaſure to us in this, as the other was in the former Reflection.

III.

I deſign not here a juſt and Particular Treatiſe concerning *The Method of Study* or *Inquiry after*

Truth, this Province being already Profeſſedly undertaken, and Excellently adorn'd by two as great Maſters of Thinking as ever were, or are like to be in the World, *Carteſius* and *Malebranche*, of both which your *Ladyſhip* is ſo much a *Miſtreſs*, that a further undertaking of this kind would be as needleſs to your better information, as to the Argument it ſelf, after the Management of it under ſuch Excellent hands. However ſomething I muſt ſay, it being impoſſible to ſhew that wrong Methods are uſed in this *Grand Inqueſt*, but by predefining which is the *Right*. This therefore I ſhall do, but *briefly* only, and in *General*.

IV.

Since therefore that Truth which is Perfective of the underſtanding is *Neceſſary Truth*, and ſince this Neceſſary Truth is the ſame with the Divine Ideas (both which being already proved, are here

here ſuppoſed) following the thred of the ſame Hypotheſis, I find it Neceſſary to affirm, that the right and indeed only Method of Enquiry after that Truth which is perfective of the underſtanding is by Conſulting the *Ideal World*, where only it is, or the Divine λόγος, who ſays of himſelf that he is not only the *Truth*, but alſo the *way*.

V.

Here I ſuppoſe two things, firſt that this Divine λόγος, or Ideal World is intimately united with, and preſential to the Mind. Secondly that we ſee and underſtand all things in him, That he is our *Light* and our *Wiſdom*, the Light *by* which we See, and the Light *which* we See, that he is the very λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, the inward word and Subſtantial Conception of our Minds, as he is of the Father, and that in this Senſe he *inlightens* every Man that comes into the World. This I

Vide, *Reason and Religion.* need not prove now, because I have done it professedly elsewhere, only I shall pass one necessary Remark upon the manner of our being inlighten'd by the Divine λόγος, who may be said to inlighten us in a double respect, either *Fundamentally* and *Potentially* by putting us into a *Capacity* of Illumination, by his intimate Union and Presence with us, or else *Effectually* and *Actually*, when we *attend* to his Divine Light, which is always present to *us*, tho *we* are not so to *it*. In the Former sense he inlightens every Man, in the latter only those who duly consult him and attend to him.

VI.

For I consider, that the Divine λόγος, is an *Inlightenes* in the same Proportion as he is a *Redeemer*. Now he redeems us either by putting us in a Salvable and Reconcilable State, which is a Redemption *Universal Incondionate* and *Antecedent*, or by actually reconciling

ciling and Saving us, which depends upon, and is consequent to certain conditions, and is conferr'd only upon those who are qualify'd accordingly. And as his *Redemption* is double, so is his *Illumination*. He inlightens either by putting us in a state or possibility of *Illumination* by being intimately present with us, and surrounding us with his Divine *Ideal Light*, which is a Benefit Common to all, or by actually *informing* our understandings when we apply our selves with due Attention to his all-diffused Light, which is ever present to us, and to the whole Creation, and *Shineth* even *in the Darkness*, tho *the Darkness Comprehend it not*. Joh. 1. 5.

VII.

And I was not a little glad to find the Grounds of this distinction in the writings of that Elevated Heathen, *Hierocles*, which I shall give you in the words of my own Translation. This *bright* Heathen Commenting upon that Mystical Prayer

Prayer of Pythagoras, *O Father* Jupiter, *either free all from their Manifold evils, Or elſe Diſcover to all what Dæmon they uſe,* Moves this Queſtion, *ſince they that know God and themſelves are free from Mortal Paſſions; why then are not all freed, ſince all are ſufficiently aſſiſted with the Opportunities of this knowledge?* To which he firſt gives
P. 144. this general Anſwer, *Becauſe the greateſt part of Men embrace evil of their own accord, ſince they neither ſee nor hear Neighbouring good.* Then a little after he is more particular in his Account. *Since*
P. 146. *therefore* (ſays he) *that any thing may be ſhewn* to any one, *'tis neceſſary that the actions of two Perſons concur (for how can you ſhew what you have a mind ſhould be ſhewn, to a Blind Man, although you offer it to him a thouſand times, or how can you ſhew to one that ſees, if you offer nothing to his Sight) both theſe muſt be preſent, ſome good propoſed by him that ſhews, and an Eye capable*

pable of ſeeing in him to whom it is to be ſhewn; ſo that from a viſible object, and a Faculty of ſeeing, may reſult a Manifeſtation. This being ſo, let us ſuppoſe that all would be freed from evil, if their Maker did ſhew to all the knowledge of his own Nature, and what Dæmon they themſelves uſe. But we find that all are not deliver'd from evil, it follows therefore that he does not make this diſcovery to all, but to thoſe only who of their own accord endeavour to free themſelves from evil, and voluntarily fix their Eye upon what is ſhewn by the intention of Contemplation. And again a little after, *thus every Illumination* of God by the *Concurrence of our viſion, becomes a Diſcovery.* P. 148.

VIII.

In all which Proceſs, this refined Heathen ſuppoſes that God is ready on his part to inlighten all Men; nay, that he does inlighten them all ſo far as to put them in the way, and within the Poſſibili-

ty

ty of Illumination, which then becomes *Actual* and *Effectual* when they yield due Attention to the Divine Light. He does not indeed descend to so much Nicety and Particularity as to ascribe this Illumination to the Divine λόγος, or *Ideal World*, but only to God in general, nor does he determine whether God does inlighten us only *Efficiently*, by infusing Acts or Habits of knowledge (as is more vulgarly held, than understood, and indeed is no way intelligible) or *Formally* by being himself the very Formal Light of our Minds, and the immediate Object of our Knowledge. This I say he does not determine, nor do I cite him to this purpose, having sufficiently Explain'd and Establisht this Theory elsewhere, but only to shew his Concurrence with me in this Distinction of the *double Illumination* of God.

Reason and Religion.

IX.

These Suppositions being premised, First

First, that that Truth which is Perfective of the understanding is *Necessary Truth*; then Secondly, that this Necessary Truth is the same with the Divine Ideas; then Thirdly, that the Divine λόγος, or Ideal World, is intimately united with, and Præsential to the Mind; then Fourthly, that we see and understand all things in him, and that 'tis he that is our inlightner; and that lastly, tho he inlightens all *Fundamentally* and *Potentially*, yet this Illumination is not reduced to *Act*, and made *Effectual*, but by the intervening of some Condition on our parts, which is duly to consult and apply our selves to him. From these Premises the same Conclusion which we touch't on before, necessarily and evidently follows, that the Right and only Method of Enquiry after that Truth which is Perfective of the understanding, is to consult the Divine λόγος, or Ideal World. For this is the Region of Truth, and here are

Colos. 2. 3. are *hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.* This is that great and Univerſal *Oracle* lodged in every Man's Breaſt, whereof the Antient *Urim* and *Thummim* was an Expreſſive Type or Emblem. This is *Reaſon*, this is *Conſcience*, this is *Truth*, this is that *Light Within* ſo *Darkly* talk'd of, by ſome who have by their aukward, untoward, and *Unprincipled* way of repreſenting it, diſcredited one of the Nobleſt Theorys in the World. But the thing in it ſelf rightly underſtood is true, and if any ſhall yet call it *Quakeriſm*, or Euthuſiaſm, I ſhall only make this reply at preſent, that 'tis ſuch Quakeriſm as makes a good part of *St. John's Goſpel*, and of *St. Auſtin's Works.* But to return, this I ſay is that *Divine Oracle* which we all may, and muſt conſult, if we would inrich our minds with Truth, that Truth which is Perfective of the underſtanding. And this is the true *Method* of being

ing truly wiſe. And this is no other Method, than what is adviſed us by this Divine λόγος, the Subſtantial Wiſdom of God. *Bleſſed is the Man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at the Poſts of my Doors.* And again ſays the ſame Subſtantial Wiſdom, *Who ſo is Simple, let him turn in hither.* And again, *I am the Light of the World, he that follows me,* or (as the word more properly ſignifies) he that conſorts or keeps company with me, *walketh not in Darkneſs.* This therefore is *via Intelligentiæ*, the way and Method of true Knowledge, to apply our ſelves to the Divine λόγος, to conſult the *Ideal World.*

Pro v. 8. 34.

C. 9. 4.

Joh. 8. 12.

X.

Thus in general. If now it be further demanded how this is to be done, I anſwer that there are three ways of doing it, and I can think of no more. The Firſt is by *Attention.* The Second is by *Purity* of Heart and Life. And the

the Third is by *Prayer*. Upon each of which I ſhall beſtow ſome few Remarks, ſuch as may rather give *hints* than *full entertainment* to your thoughts, becauſe I Know your Ladyſhip loves to have ſomething left to *work out* by your ſelf in your own private Meditations. Which Conſideration has made me all along uſe leſs Prolixity than the *Quaintneſs* and *Weightineſs* of my Argument would otherwiſe juſtify.

XI.

The firſt Method aſſign'd is *Attention*, or Application of Mind to the Intelligible World, the World of Truth. This is the ſame with *Thinking* or *Speculating*, which if intelligibly accounted for, will be found to be nothing elſe but the Converſion of the Mind to the Ideal World, or Omniformity of the Divine Eſſence; which as it is the *Firſt*, ſo is it alſo the *Directeſt* and moſt Compendious Method of Science. For this is to go directly

rectly to the *Spring-head*, to the *Lucid Fountain* of Good, 'tis to take hold of Eſſential Truth *nakedly* as it is in it ſelf (as a very Contemplative Perſon expreſſes it) 'tis to fix the Eye of the Mind upon the *Intellectual Sun*, upon him who is Subſtantial Truth, and the Light of the World. Which muſt needs be the moſt ready way to be inlightned. For the more heedfully we attend to the Ideal World, the more we ſhall ſee and diſcover of it; and not only ſo, but alſo more clearly *diſtinguiſh* what we do diſcover. For ſo a man that caſts a ſhort careleſs glance upon the *Galaxy*, ſees only a *Confuſed whiteneſs* ariſing from the numerous mixture of little Splendors, but when the ſame Perſon fixes his Eye with ſteadineſs and delay of Application, he begins to diſcern ſomething more diſtinctly, a new Star ever and anon ariſes under his inſpection, not diſcover'd before, and ſtill the longer and harder he

Tauler Sermon. 3. Paſch.

looks, the more he discerns, till at length he has discover'd as much as he can well attend to at once, and has satiated his Faculty with the *Brightness* and *Multitude* of Light. The Application is as Obvious, as the Figure is Pertinent, and therefore I shall only remark this one thing more upon this part, that this was the *Method* of the first Inventors of *Arts* and *Sciences*, who made their way into the Coasts of Learning by meer *dint* of *Thinking*; and further, that this is the very Method that has been used by the greatest Improvers of them ever since, such as *Bacon*, *Boyle*, *Descartes*, *Galileus*, *Harvey*, *Mersennus*, *Digby*, *Malebranche*, *Poiret*, and (whom I name with particular Honour and Reverence) our Excellent Friend Dr. *More*. All these must be allow'd, and I think are to be great Improvers of Learning, and that 'twas by this Method they did it. And I dare *Prophesie*, that if ever any

any extraordinary Advancement be for the future made in the World, 'twill be done by *Thinking*.

XII.

This as to *Thinking* in *General*. But now as to the *Order* of Thinking, if your Ladiſhip can be ſuppoſed to need any inſtruction about it, I cannot recommend you to a better Tutor than your Friend *M. Malebranche*, in his ſecond part of his ſixth Book of Inquiry after Truth, where he purpoſely deſcribes the *Method of Thinking*, which you may remember he reduces to theſe few following Laws. P. 411.

XIII.

The firſt Law is, *that evidence be maintain'd in our Reaſonings*. From this Principle depends this general Law concerning the Matter of our Studies, *that we ought not to Reaſon but only of thoſe things whereof we have clear Ideas*, and by Neceſſary Conſequence, *that*

we ought always to begin with the *moſt ſimple and eaſie things, and alſo to dwell long upon them, before we advance to the inquiſition of things more Complex and Difficult.*

XIV.

Upon the ſame general Principle, depend the Laws concerning the manner whereby we are to proceed in the Solution of Queſtions. The firſt of which Laws is this, *That the ſtate of the Queſtion to be ſolved is to be moſt diſtinctly Conceived.* Beſides, the Ideas of the Terms ought to be diſtinct that they may be Compared with one another, and that the Relations which are ſought for may be Known.

XV.

But when the Relations of things to one another cannot be Known by immediately Comparing them, then the Second Law is, *that we ſhould employ our thoughts to find out one or more Middle Ideas, which we may uſe as a Common Meaſure*

ſure to Know by their help the Relations that are between thoſe things. And withal he adviſes that we ſhould ſtudy to have thoſe Ideas clear and diſtinct, proportionably to the Accuracy and Numerouſneſs of thoſe Relations which we endeavour to deprehend.

XVI.

But when the Queſtions are Difficult and require a long Examination, then the third Law is, *that from the Matter in hand all thoſe things ſhould be removed whoſe examination is not neceſſary to the diſcovery of the ſought for Truth.* Becauſe the Capacity of the Mind is not to be without reaſon divided, but all its force is to be imploy'd about thoſe things from which it may perceive Light. And all thoſe things which can be removed, and which being remov'd, the Queſtion remains intire; they are the things that do not belong to the Queſtion.

XVII.

When the Question is included within a few Terms, then the Fourth Rule is, *that the matter of our Meditation is to be divided by parts, and those parts to be handled singly according to their Natural Order, by beginning with the more Simple, that is, with those which include fewest Relations. And that we should not pass on to the more Complex, till the more Simple be distinctly known, and render'd Familiar.*

XVIII.

When by Meditation these things become Familiar to us, then the Fifth Rule is, *that the Ideas of all these are to be Contracted, and disposed in the Imagination, or to be Written down in Paper, that they may no longer fill the Capacity of the Mind.* This Rule, tho always useful, yet he makes it necessary only in the most difficult Questions, which require a great Capacity of Mind. And he

says

ſays withal, that the uſe of this and the following Rules, is not to be Accurately known but only in *Algebra*.

XIX.

When the Ideas of all things neceſſary to be conſider'd, are clear, familiar, contract, and orderly digeſted in the Imagination, or expreſt in Paper; then the ſixth Law is, *That all things are to be Compared or Collated according to the Laws of Combination, alternately among one another, either by the ſole Intuition of the Mind, or by the Motion of the Imagination, joyn'd with the Intuition of the Mind, or by the Calculation of the Pen joyn'd with the Attention of the Mind and of the Imagination.*

XX.

If none of all thoſe Relations which reſult from all thoſe Collations, be that which is ſought after, *then again from all thoſe Relations thoſe are to be removed which are of no uſe to the Solution*

of the Queſtion: And the others are to be made Familiar, to be Contracted, and to be orderly diſpoſed in the Imagination, or expreſs'd in Paper, and to be compared with each other, according to the Laws of Combination. And then we are to ſee whether the Compound Relation which is ſought for be any one of all thoſe Compound Relations which reſult from thoſe new Compariſons.

XXI.

If none of thoſe found Relations include the Solution of the Queſtion, *then again from all thoſe Relations, the unſerviceable are to be caſt away, the other are to be made familiar*, &c. And by proceeding in this manner, the Truth or Relation ſought for, be it never ſo Complex, will at laſt be found, provided we are able ſufficiently to extend the Capacity of our Mind, by Contracting Ideas, and that in all our Operations we always attend to the End and Scope which is to be arriv'd at. For in every

every ſtep of this Intellectual Progreſs, we ought to have our eye perpetually fix'd upon the State of the Queſtion. To all which he adds one Caution more, that we ſhould beware leſt we ſhould ſit down Contented with a falſe Light or Appearance, and ſo be deceived. And that therefore our Collations in order to the finding out the Truth we look after, be ſo often repeated, till we can no longer with hold our aſſent without being Secretly Chid and reprehended by a Certain *Maſter* Anſwering from *within* to our Queſtions, that is to our Labour, Application of Mind, and deſire of Heart. By which *Maſter within* this admirable Theoriſt can mean nothing elſe but the Divine λόγος, or *Ideal World*, that Univerſal Oracle of Mankind, and of all the Intelligent Creation.

This is a ſhort view of thoſe Laws which the Excellent *M. Malebranche* has given concerning the

the *Method of Thinking*. And I believe if an Angel had been ingaged in the undertaking, he could not have given *Better*. They are all Natural, Clear, Distinct, Easie and depending; *Few* enough not to *burthen* or *Distract* the Mind, and yet *Many* enough to *inform it*. And therefore I shall not be guilty of so much *Presumption* and *Impertinence* as to prescribe any other, thinking it sufficient to consider and Practice these. And so much for the first way of Consulting the Ideal World, which is by Thinking.

XXIII.

The second way is by Purity of Heart and Life. This I confess has a more immediate and special influence upon the Knowledge of *Spiritual* and *Moral* Truths, according to that of our Saviour, *If any Man will do his will*, he shall *know of the Doctrine*, &c. and that of his Prime Apostle, *The Animal Man perceiveth not the things of God*,

Joh. 7. 17.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

God, &c. But its Efficacy is not confined here, but has a larger Sphere of activity, and serves to the discovery even of all *Ideal* or *Necessary* Truth. For as viciousness not only proceeds *from* Ignorance, but also *causes* it, by besotting and clouding the understanding, so Purity of Heart and Life not only proceeds from Light and Knowledge, but also produces it, and helps the Soul to see more Clearly and Distinctly. Hence the Pythagoric and Platonic καθαρτικὴ, the Method of Purification and Purgation so much talk'd of by *Porphyry*, *Iamblichus*, *Plotinus*, and particularly by *Hierocles* in his Introduction to his Noble Comment, where he has these Words, *As a Blear Eye cannot behold a very bright object till it be Purged, so a Soul not yet Clarify'd and refined by Vertue is not qualify'd to gaze upon the Beauty of Truth.* And the same Method is no less recommended in Scripture. *Wis-*

dom

Wiſd. 4. *dom will not enter into a Polluted Spirit*, ſays the Wiſe Man. And ſays the Angel to *Daniel*, *many* Dan. 12. 10. *ſhall be Purify'd and made white, and none of the wicked ſhall underſtand, but the wiſe ſhall underſtand.* Pſal. 119. And ſays the Pſalmiſt, *I am wiſer than the Aged becauſe I keep thy Commandments.* And to this purpoſe alſo is that of our Lord to be underſtood, *He that follows me*, that is, that lives after my Example, *Walketh not in Darkneſs.* Joh. 8.12. The Purity of his *Heart* will be a Light to his underſtanding.

XXIV.

But to repreſent this more diſtinctly, there are two ways whereby Purity of Heart ſerves to the acquirement of Knowledge. *By Natural Efficacy*, and by the *Divine grace* and *Benediction.* And firſt it does it by Natural Efficacy, either by *Clarifying* the *Medium*, or by *aſſiſting* the *faculty.* The former I conceive and repreſent after this Manner. I ſuppoſe

poſe in the firſt place that the Soul ſees through a *Medium*; Secondly, that this Medium is our *Terreſtrical Vehicle*; Thirdly, that the *Groſneſs* of this Medium *hinders* the *Viſion* of the Soul. All which I ground upon thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Now we ſee through a Glaſs, darkly.* 1 Cor. 13. 12.

XXV.

This Suppoſed, it follows that whatſoever Clarifys this Medium does alſo help the Viſion of the Soul. And this *Purity* does, eſpecially that more Eminent part of it which conſiſts in *Chaſtity* and *Temperance*. For firſt it Compoſes the *Paſſions*, eſpecially that of *Luſt*, by that the *Animal Spirits*, and by that the *Blood*. For the Motion of the Paſſions Ferments the Spirits, and the Fermentation of the Spirits agitates the Blood, and by agitation raiſes all the feculent and droſſy parts of it; and makes it like a troubled Fountain, thick and muddy. And this

this I take to be one true reaſon why Men in any Paſſion can't reaſon ſo clearly as when they are in more quiet and *ſilence* of Spirit. But now by Purity of Heart all this diſturbance is allay'd and compoſed, the Paſſions are becalm'd, the Spirits fix'd, the Fountain of the Blood clears up, and ſo all the *inner* part of that *Glaſs* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, becomes more bright and pellucid, more apt to tranſmit the *Rays* of the *Ideal Light*, and conſequently we ſee more clearly through it. Tho it be ſtill but *Darkly* in compariſon of what we ſhall do hereafter.

XXVI.

But this is not all; This Purity does alſo Clarifie the *outward* part of the *Glaſs* too. Firſt *by Conſequence*, becauſe the finer the Spirits and Blood are, the finer will be the Threds of the outward Veil alſo. Then more *directly*, becauſe Temperance does refine

and

and Subtilize the Texture of the Body, diminiſhes from its Bulk and Groſſneſs, and unloads the Soul of a good part of that Burthen which not only preſſes down her *Aſpirations*, but alſo hinders her *Sight*: And beſides, it refines the the inner part too, by bringing in freſh ſupplies of fine Spirits. Dan. 1. 15 This was that Temperance which made the Faces of *Daniel*, *Hananiah*, *Miſhael* and *Azariah* look *Clear* and *Fair*, and which made them *Wiſe* too, gave a quick and delicate air to their Countenances, and let in the Light of the Ideal World upon their Souls. This was that Philoſophical Temperance of the *Pythagoreans*, which (to uſe the Words of Dr. *More* Commenting upon that place) *is the Mother of that Wiſdom which makes the Face to ſhine, and nouriſhes the Luciform Vehicle of the Soul.*

XXVII.

And as this Purity does Clarify the Medium, ſo does it alſo *Aſſiſt* the

the Faculty. And this it does by the ſame general way whereby it clarifies the Medium, that is, by compoſing the Paſſions. For the Paſſions not only trouble and thicken the Medium (as was noted and explain'd before) but alſo *divide* and *diſperſe* the *Faculty*. For the more things a man *deſires*, the more things he will be engaged to *think* upon, and the more things he thinks upon at once, the more Languid and Confuſe will his Conception be. But now this Purity by compoſing the Paſſions, contracts the Deſires, and by contracting the Deſires, it contracts alſo by conſequence the Thoughts, and by this the Man is reduced to a greater *Unity*, *Simplicity*, and *Recollection* of Mind, and having but few thoughts to divide him, he is the better inabled to think *clearly* and *diſtinctly*.

XXVIII.

And thus have I given a clear and diſtinct account how Purity of

of Heart ſerves to the acquirement of Knowledge by a *Natural Efficacy*. This it does alſo ſecondly by the *Divine Grace* and *Benediction*. Purity of Heart is that *Heavenly Lure* which invites not only the Holy Spirit, but alſo the Divine λόγος, to come and dwell in the Soul, and to inrich it with his *Ideal* Communications. This we may be aſſured of from his own mouth, *He that loveth me, ſhall be lov'd of my Father, and I will love him, and manifeſt my ſelf to him.* Joh. 14. 21. And again, *If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* V. 23. The pure, chaſte and good Soul ſhall not only be loved by the Divine λόγος, but be alſo of his Council and Privacy. For this is the *Spouſe* of the *Word Eternal*, who firſt aſſumed *innocent Nature*, and then aſſumes *innocent Perſons*, the firſt by a *Natural*, the ſecond by a *Myſtic* union. This is the *Beloved Diſciple* who has the

priviledge to lean upon the Bosom of his Lord, and to be admitted to his more secret Communications. And therefore says the Psalmist, Psal. 25. 13. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* And says our Lord himself, *Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* And Concerning the Four Children that refused to defile themselves with the Portion of the Kings Meat, it is said, that *God gave them Knowledge, and skill in all Learning and Wisdom*; and that Dan. 1. 17. *Daniel had understanding in all Visions and Dreams.* For they were not only Pure and Temperate but Religiously so, in obedience to the Law of their God, the God of *Israel. Which the said God rewarded with Knowledge and skill in all Learning and Wisdom in them all, but in Daniel peculiarly, with a faculty of interpreting Ænigmatical Dreams and Visions*; as the Learned Dr. *More* observes in his excellent Pag. 5.

lent

lent Comment upon that place.

XXIX.

The third and laſt way of conſulting the Ideal World is by *Prayer*. This is a method which the Scripture alſo adviſes us to: *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.* Jam. 1. 5. And this we know was the *Method* whereby the Wiſeſt of men attain'd his unparallel'd Wiſdom. 1 King. 3. 9. For as Wiſdom was his *Choice*, ſo the *Method* of his ſeeking and gaining, it was by *Prayer*. And 'tis further obſervable that he addreſs'd himſelf to the Divine λόγος, or Ideal World in particular, as you may ſee in that ſolemn Prayer of his recorded in the Book of Wiſdom, *give me Wiſdom that ſitteth by thy Throne*, &c. Which I commend to your *Ladyſhips* peruſal at leiſure.

XXX.

And thus (*Madam*) have I *Defined* and by Scripture and Reaſon *Proved*, what is the Right Method

of profecuting that Truth which is Perfective of the underſtanding. This in general I have ſhewn to conſiſt in *Conſulting the Ideal World*; The manner of doing which I have alſo ſhewn to be, Firſt, by Thinking, the *Order* of which is alſo defined, Secondly, by *Purity* of *Heart* and *Life*, and laſtly by *Prayer*. This I take to be *via Intelligentiæ*, the Way and Method of Wiſdom, whoſe *Houſe* I think is *Now Built*, tho not upon *Seven*, yet upon *Three* Subſtantial *Pillars*, and I ſhould be glad if any one would be ſo kind as to ſhew me the weakneſs of the Ground upon which they ſtand.

XXXI.

And now (*Madam*) I think I I need not uſe many words to ſhew that as Learning is generally placed in ſuch things as are not Perfective of the underſtanding, ſo that what is ſo is generally proſecuted by undue Methods. For 'tis but to compare the Methods in com-

common uſe with that which we have premiſed and demonſtrated, and you will immediately perceive the falſeneſs and irregularity of them. For Firſt, whereas the Firſt and general Method of Wiſdom and knowledge is by conſulting the Divine λόγος or Ideal World, the *World* of *Light*, that Light which inlightens every Man that comes into *this* World, the generality of *Students* don't ſo much as Dream of this, nor make any ſuch Application, but apply themſelves altogether to the *Eſtypal* World, to the World of *Darkneſs* and *Obſcurity*. So verifying that complaint of God by the Prophet, *My People have forſaken me the Fountain of Living Waters, and have digg'd to themſelves broken Ciſterns, that will hold no Water.*

XXXII.

Then again, whereas another more Particular Method is by *Attention* and *Thinking*, this is gene-

rally ſo little regarded, that no ſort of Men think ſo little for the moſt part as they that are ingaged in the Profeſs Study of Learning and Knowledge. This they don't reckon as any part of *Study*, nor as any Progreſs in the Stage of Learning, but only as a *Graver* way of being *Idle*. 'Tis then only they *Study* when they are hanging their Heads over an Old Muſty *Folio*, and are making huge *Common-places*, and ſtuffing their Memories with *Grey* Sentences, and Venerable ſayings: And thus they ſpend their *Time* and their *Ink*, and having Scambled through a company of Books (moſt of which perhaps were *Written* to as little purpoſe, as they are *Read*) they think themſelves *Learned* Men, and the World is too often of their Opinion, tho they have not made themſelves Maſters of any *Senſe* or *Notion*, nor are able to demonſtrate one ſingle Truth upon ſolid Principles, and in a Conſequential Proceſs.

XXXIII.

And this is the Method not only of thoſe who *Miſplace* Learning, but alſo of the Moſt of thoſe that place it *aright*. For even thoſe that place it in *Ideal Truths* do not generally *Think* for it, but *Read* for it, Seek it not in their Souls, but in *Books*. And this methinks I can never ſufficiently Wonder at. Indeed as for thoſe that place Learning not in being able to frame Clear and Diſtinct Conceptions of ones *Own*, but in Knowing the Opinions of *Others*, 'tis no wonder that *they* take this Method, for tho it be Not a means to the End they *ſhould* propoſe, yet, tis a Means to the End which they *do* propoſe. But the wonder is how thoſe that place Learning as they ſhould, in the Clear Conception of Ideal Truths, ſhould think to find this meerly by tumbling over Books.

XXXIV.

I deny not but that *Reading* is

One way of *Knowing* (otherwiſe I ſhould not be at the Pains to write this to your Ladyſhip) but then, tis only by *Accident* that it is ſo, as it gives hints and occaſions for *Thinking*. And therefore *Thinking* is the only thing to be regarded even in *Reading* (for Reading *as ſuch* is Nothing) and then we Read to moſt purpoſe, when we are thereby moſt enabled to *Think*. So that *Thinking* is the *End* of *Reading*, as Underſtanding is the End of Thinking. We Ought therefore to Read only in Order to Thinking. And yet this Method is generally ſo much inverted, that the Main Streſs is laid upon Reading. Nothing but *Read*, *Read*, as long as Eyes and Spectacles will hold, not regarding whether the Head be *Clear*, ſo that it be *full*.

XXXV.

As to the particular Order in Thinking propoſed by *M. Malebranche*, I refer your *Ladyſhip* to the ſame Excellent Author to ſhew

ſhew you how much it is *tranſgreſs'd*. Which he does at large, and to Wonderful Satisfaction, ſhewing firſt that the *School-Philoſophers* do not obſerve that General Law concerning the matter of ſtudy, which is the Cauſe of a great many Errors in their Phyſiology. Then ſhewing that the ſecond part of the General Law is not obſerved by the Common Philoſophers, and what extraordinary advances *Carteſius* made in Learning by the exact obſervation of it. Then he proceeds to explain the Principles of *Ariſtotle's* Philoſophy, where he ſhews that he never obſerved the ſecond Branch of the General Law, and reflects upon thoſe Errors of his Philoſophy occaſioned by his not doing ſo. But for a fuller account in theſe things I refer you to the Author himſelf.

XXXVI.

Then again, whereas *Purity* of Heart and Life is another Method of

of arriving to the Light and Knowledge of Ideal Truth, your *Ladyſhip* cannot but know, and 'tis a ſad as well as a true obſervation, that this is not only neglected among that part of Mankind that ſit down contentedly in Ignorance, and aſpire to no greater ſtock of Knowledge than what they brought with them into the world, but alſo among the generality of thoſe few that addict themſelves to the Cultivation and Improvement of their minds. Nay theſe in proportion to their Number ſeem more guilty of this neglect than the other, and nothing ſo common as to ſee men of Curious and Inquiſitive tempers and of *famed* Learning, who yet are very Corrupt in the Moral ſtate of their minds, and live very ill lives. Whence ſome have taken occaſion to repreſent *Learning*, as an Enemy to *Religion*, and have cry'd up *Ignorance* as the *Mother* of *Devotion*. And tho the *Concluſion* of theſe men be

be notoriouſly weak and abſurd, yet it muſt be confeſt that the *Ground* upon which they build it, is too true. Men *famed* for *Learning*, are oftentimes as *infamous* for *Living*, and many that ſtudy hard to furniſh their *Heads*, are yet very negligent in purifying their *Hearts*, not conſidering that there is a *Moral*, as well as a *Natural* Communication between one and the other, and that they are concern'd to be pure in Heart and Life not only upon the *Common Account*, in order to a happy ſtate hereafter, but alſo in purſuance of their own particular way and end here.

XXXVII.

Then again Laſtly, whereas another Method of Wiſdom is *Prayer*, I do not find that the generality of Students do at all apply themſelves to this Method. Pray indeed ('tis to be hoped) they do for other things, which they think lye more out of their reach,

reach, but as for Learning and Knowledge, they think they can compaſs this well enough by their own proper Induſtry, and the help of good Books, without being beholden to the aſſiſtance of Heaven. And this, tho they do place Learning in the knowledge of *Neceſſary Truth*: Which procedure of theirs I cannot reſolve into any other principle, (I mean as to thoſe that act by any) but the meer want of knowing or conſidering that this Neceſſary Truth is really the ſame with God himſelf. For did they attentively conſider that *God is Truth*, and that ſo much as they poſſeſs of Truth, ſo much they have of God, 'tis not to be imagined they ſhould be ſo indifferent in uſing *Prayer*, or any of the other preceding Methods of Conſulting God for his *own* Light.

The End of the Second Reflection.

The

The Third Reflection.

Wherein the General Conduct of Human Life is tax'd with a too importunate, and over-earneſt Purſuit after Knowledge in General.

I.

HAving paſs'd over the two firſt Stages of the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life, that of the *End*, and that of the *Means*; and reflected upon the Irregularities of each, by ſhewing how both are generally miſtaken and miſplaced; I am now arrived to the Third and Laſt, which conſiſts not in the choice of the *Object*, or of the

the *Method* to it (that belonging to the two former) but in the *Degree* of *Affection* wherewith they are profecuted. Which part of our Intellectual Conduct, as it is equally *Capable* of being faulty, ſo I ſhall here make it my buſineſs to ſhew that it is *actually* as faulty and irregular, if not more than either of the two former. And the fault that I tax it with, is, *A too importunate and over-earneſt Purſuit after Knowledge in General.*

II.

The Charge of this Reflection is of a *larger* compaſs and extent than either of the two Preceding, thoſe being directed againſt ſuch as either miſplace the *Object*, or elſe miſtake the *Method* of Learning and Knowledge; but this takes in both together, and others alſo not concerned in either of the former. For not only thoſe that err in the placing of Learning, or in the method to it, but alſo thoſe who are *Right* in *both*, come under the

the Cenſure of the Preſent Reflection, they all agree in this, in being too importunate and vehement in the Purſuit of Knowledge.

III.

Now in the making out the Truth of this Charge, We muſt here alſo according to the Method obſerv'd in the two former Reflections, firſt lay down a common meaſure of Proceeding, by ſtating the due Bounds of our Preſent Affection to, and ſearch after Knowledge, Or, how far it becomes man to imploy himſelf in the Proſecution of Learning and Knowledge? the due ſtating of which Queſtion will be a certain direction to us in the Determination of this, whether our general Inqueſt after Knowledge be Immoderate or no. Now for the Determination of the firſt it will be neceſſary to draw up the true State or Hypotheſis of man according to the Poſture wherein he now ſtands. Which I ſhall do diſtinctly in theſe following Conſiderations. IV.

IV.

First I consider, that the utmost Pitch of Knowledge man by his utmost endeavours can arrive to in this world is very inconsiderable. God indeed has given us Reason enough to distinguish us from the *Brute* part of the Creation, and we may improve it so far as to distinguish our selves from *One another*, and so one man may deserve to be call'd Learned and Knowing in comparison of another that is either *Naturally* more ignorant, or more *unimproved*; but absolutely speaking, the most that any or all of us either know or can know here is of little or no Consideration. What we know of God is but *little*, for as the Apostle says, *we see through a Glass, darkly*; what we know of our selves perhaps is *Less*, and what we know of the world about us is *not much*. *We have* Eccl. 43. *seen but a few of Gods works*, as the wise man observes, and we *understand* yet *fewer*. There are almost an

an infinite number of things which we never ſo much as *thought* of, and of *moſt* things we conceive very *darkly* and *uncertainly*, and there is not *one* thing from the greateſt to the *leaſt*, which we do or can underſtand *thoroughly*. Thoſe that apply their whole ſtudy to any one thing, can never come to the End of that one thing, for not only every *Science* but every *particular* of it has its unmeaſurable depths and receſſes; and 'tis confeſs'd by a great inquirer into the Nature of *Antimony* (as 'tis related by the Honourable Mr. *Boyle*) that *'tis impoſſible for one man to underſtand throughly thatone ſingle Mineral only.* Nat. Hiſt. p. 13. And if a man cannot underſtand *All* of ſo *little*, how *little* muſt he underſtand of *All*! Suppoſe further, that all the Knowledge of the Learned were put together, 'twould weigh but Light, for what one Art or Science is there that is brought to any tolerable Perfection? And if the *Common Stock* be ſo little,

how ſmall a Pittance is it that muſt fall to every particular Man's ſhare! And where is that Man who after all his Poring and Studying, is able to anſwer all the Queſtions, I will not ſay which Job. 38. God put to *Job*, but which may be askt him by the next *Idiot* he meets?

V.

'Twere an endleſs undertaking to repreſent at large the little that we know, or are capable of knowing. Nor do I deſign to turn a ſecond *Agrippa*, and entertain your Ladyſhip with a long Harangue about the *Vanity* of *Humane Sciences*, only give me leave to touch upon two notorious inſtances of our Ignorance, and in that very Science which is pretended to be at the very *Vertical* Point of Improvement. 'Tis Concerning the the *Maximum* and the *Minimum Naturale*, the *Greateſt* and the *Leaſt* thing in Nature. As to the firſt, the Queſtion is whether the Extenſion

ſion of the Univerſe be Finite or Infinite? If you ſay 'tis Poſitively Infinite, beſides the difficulty of conceiving how any thing can be ſo extended, 'twill follow that God himſelf cannot add the leaſt further Dimenſion to it. If you ſay 'tis Finite, ſuppoſe your ſelf in the utmoſt extremities of it, and try whether it be poſſible for you to diſ-imagin further Extenſion. Then as to the Second, the Queſtion is whether every, even the Leaſt aſſignable Part of matter be infinitely Diviſible or no? If you ſay yes, then 'twill unavoidably follow that the leaſt Atom will have as many Parts as the whole World. If you ſay no, then you muſt ſay that Matter may be Divided ſo long till at laſt you come to a Part that does not contain more other Parts, if ſo, then I enquire has this *uncontaining* Part Figure, or has it not? If not, then 'tis infinite, Figure being only the Termination of Quantity. But if it

has, then it has more other Parts *above*, *below* and of *each ſide*, and conſequently may again be divided, contrary to what you ſuppos'd. So that you ſee here are *Deſperate* Difficulties on both ſides, ſay what you will you are equally baffled, and yet 'tis moſt certain that one only can be true, they being two oppoſite parts of a Contradiction, but which is ſo, is beyond the Capacity of Humane underſtanding to determine.

VI.

The like Difficulties we meet with when we inquire concerning *Time*, whether it be *Infinitely* diviſible, or only into *Moments*? And ſo again in the Buſineſs of *Motion*, whether there be any ſuch thing as the *Extream* Degree of *Swiftneſs* and *Slowneſs*, or no? Neither of which can be defined without maniſeſt Abſurdity. But 'tis ſuperfluous, as well as endleſs, to diſplay the particulars of our Ignorance, tho indeed when all Accompts are caſt

caſt up, *that* will be found to be our *beſt Knowledge.* This only in General, our Life is ſo ſhort, our Progreſs in Learning ſo ſlow, and Learning in it ſelf ſo long and tedious, and what we do or can know ſo very little, that the *Patrons* of *Scepticiſm* had much more reaſon to conclude from the *Diſability* of our *Facculties* and the *ſlightneſs* of our *Attainments*, than from the *uncertainty* and Inſtability of *Truth*, that there is *no Knowledge.*

VII.

Secondly, I conſider, that as we can here know but Little, ſo even that very little which we do, ſerves more to our Trouble and Diſquiet, than to our Pleaſure and Satisfaction. And here comes in that experimental Reflection of the Wiſe Man, *In much Wiſdom is much Grief, and he that increaſes Knowledge, increaſes Sorrow.* This Propoſition is not true, *Abſolutely* conſider'd, Knowledge being the Per- Eccleſ. 1. 18.

fection of Human Nature, the *Image of God*, and the Principal Ingredient of our Future Happineſs; but only with *relation* to the preſent State and Poſture of Man. And in this reſpect it is abundantly true. Firſt, becauſe the more we know, the more we ſhall discover of our Ignorance, (tha being the chiefeſt thing we learn by our ſtudy) which we ſhall find to be of an infinitely larger Sphere than our Knowledge, and conſequently ſhall be more *troubled* for what we do *not* know, than *pleas'd* with what we *do*. Secondly, becauſe the Proſpect of what yet further remains to be known will inflame our Thirſt after it. For Wiſdom ſays of her ſelf, *They that Eat of me ſhall yet be Hungry, and they that Drink of me ſhall yet be Thirſty.* Which tho it be a great Commendation of Wiſdom, and an Argument of her Inexhauſtible excellence, yet 'tis withal a great inſtrument of Puniſhment to thoſe who

Coloſ. 3. 10.

who can attain to ſo little of it, as cannot *ſatisfie* that *thirſt* which it has *inflamed*. Thirdly, becauſe the more a Man improves his thinking faculty, the more apt he will be to be diſguſted and offended with the follies of Society; as the moſt delicate *Touch* is the ſooneſt put to pain. There being a thouſand impertinencies that will ſtrike very diſagreeably upon a *diſcerning* mind which won't ſo much as affect a groſſer underſtanding.

VIII.

But the Principal Ground of this Aſſertion, and which, did not the quickneſs of your *Ladyſhip's* Apprehenſion oblige me to Brevity, I could be *Voluminous* upon, is this. 'Tis moſt certain that Man is now placed in the Midſt of Vanities and unſatisfying Objects, and and that his True good is not within his reach, and conſequently whatever Pleaſure he takes in thoſe things that *are*, is purely owing to his *Ignorance* of their *Vanity*. Well,

if ſo, then Væ Sapienti, *woe be to the Wiſe Man.* This is not a Place to be *Wiſe* in. There is nothing here Solid enough to endure the *Teſt* of Wiſdom. The *Wiſe* Man cannot find a *Paradice* here, tho the *Fool* can. The more he knows the more he diſcovers the Vanity of all pretended Enjoyments, and the more he does this, the more he ſtreightens and retrenches his Delights, and the more he does this, the more he retires and withdraws himſelf from all Worldly Diverſions, and this ſets him the more a Thinking and Muſing, and this again preſents to his mind a freſh and more lively Conviction of the Worlds Vanity, and this makes him again retrench his Delights, and ſo on in this returning Circle, till at length he finds nothing but his *bare Wiſdom* to delight in. And a little more Thinking makes him ſee the Vanity of *that too.* And now all's gone. To diſpatch this part in one word, this is the Fruit of being

being Wiſe, to be able to taſte nothing that's *Preſent*, nor to flatter ones ſelf with the *Proſpect* of what is to *come*, which is a ſtate of horrible Privation and Sterility. This is the *thorough Wiſe* Mans Lot, and every advance in Wiſdom is a ſtep towards this Condition So true is it, that *he who increaſes Wiſdom, increaſes Sorrow*, while in the mean time the Fool Laughs, and is Merry.

IX.

Thirdly, I Conſider, that if our Knowledge could yield us more Satisfaction than it occaſions Trouble, yet our Life is ſo ſhort, and ſo incumber'd, that we can *make* but *little* of the enjoyment, ſo little, that 'tis not anſwerable to the meer Labour we undergo in acquiring it. All the *Morning* of our days is ſpent in the *Preliminaries* of *Learning*, in Learning Words and Terms of Art, wherein there is nothing but toil and drudgery, and before we can taſte any of the

Fruits

Fruits of the *Tree* of *Knowledge*, before we can reliſh what is *Intellectual* and *Rational* in it, our Sun is got into the *Meridian*, and then it preſently begins to *decline* and our Learning with it; our Light, our Strength, and our Time make haſte to conſume, nothing increaſes now but the *Shadows*, that is our Ignorance and Darkneſs of mind, and while we conſider and look about us, the Sun Sets, and all is concluded in the Darkneſs and Shadow of Death. But oftentimes the Sun is intercepted by a *Cloud* long before it Setts, and we live backward again, grow weak and Childiſh, Silly and forgetful, and unlearn faſter than we learnt; or if it chance to ſhine bright to the laſt, then we improve *too much*, and grow too wiſe for our *ſelves*, and reject the greateſt part of what we learnt before, as idle and inſignificant. So that we are under a Neceſſity of unlearning in a ſhort time moſt of what we have ſo *dearly* learnt,

learnt, either through *forgetfulneſs*, or *improvement* of *Judgment*.

Fourthly, I Conſider, that there is no *Neceſſity* of our being ſo wonderfully Learned and Knowing here. 'Tis neither Neceſſary as *injoin'd* by God, nor as a *Means* to any conſiderable End. We can be *Good*, and we can be *Happy* without it. And as to the Intereſt of Communities and Public Societies, 'tis *Civil Prudence* and *Honeſty*, and not *Learning* which makes *them* Happy. And leſt any advantage in our *after State* ſhould be alledged for its Neceſſity, this makes it more unneceſſary than any Conſideration beſides. For tho we are never ſo unlearned now, provided we know enough to do our Duty, and live well, we ſhall in a ſhort time arrive to ſuch a degree of Knowledge as is requiſite to our Supream Perfection, to which our Preſent Learning *cannot add*, and from which our Preſent Ignorance *will not Diminiſh*. I do not ſay this will

will be immediately upon our discharge from the Body, there being some reasonable Controversie about that, (which would be too great a *Digression* at present to pursue) tho 'tis most certain that even *then* there must needs be great *inlargements* of Understanding; However 'tis most unquestionable that this our *Intellectual Accomplishment* can be no further off than our enjoyment of the *Beatific Vision*. We shall then commence instantaneously Wise and Learned, and be fully possess'd of the *Tree* of *Knowledge*, as well as of the *Tree* of *Life*. For then that *Glass* through which we now see *Darkly* shall be laid aside, and there shall be no other but the *Speculum Deitatis*, the Glass of the Divinty, which is no other than the *Ideal* World, which shall be now more intimately united to us, and more clearly display'd before us. And tho even now there shall be Degrees of Knowledge according to the various

ous Participiation of the Ideal Light, yet the variety of this Dispensation shall not proceed by the degree of our Knowledge in this Life, but by some other Measure. For,

XI.

Fifthly, I Consider, that tho there is no necessity of our being so very *Learned* and *Knowing*, yet there is an Absolute Necessity of our being *Good* and *Vertuous*. This is Necessary both ways, as Commanded by God, and as a Means to our Final Perfection. And besides 'tis necessary *Now*, there being no other opportunity for it. If we don't know here, we may know hereafter, and shall infalliably do so if we are but *Good* here; but if we be not good here, we shall neither be *Good*, *Happy*, nor *Knowing* hereafter. The *Main* opportunity for Knowledge is *after* this Life, but the *only* opportunity for being good is *Now*. And if we take care to improve this, we are sufficiently secure of the other, and of whatever else appertains

pertains to the Perfection of our Natures. But if this be neglected all is loſt. This therefore is indiſpenſably neceſſary, and 'tis the only thing that is ſo, and 'tis neceſſary *Now*, neceſſary not only to our *Happineſs* in *General*, but alſo to that of our *Intellectual* Part in *Particular*. For,

XII.

Sixthly, And laſtly I Conſider, that thus ſtands the Caſe between *God* and *Man*. Firſt, Man is ſuppoſed to be made in a State of Innocence and Perfection, in perfect Favour and Communion with God, his true Good, and in a Capacity ſo to Continue. From this excellent ſtate he is ſuppoſed to *Fall*, and by his Fall ſo to *diſable himſelf* that he cannot by his own ſtrength *Repent* and Live well, and ſo to *provoke God*, that tho he *could* and *did Repent*, yet he would not be Pardon'd and Accepted, without Satisfaction made to Divine Juſtice. This ſatisfaction Man is ſuppoſed

not

not able to make, nor any other Creature for him. Whereupon God in great Mercy and Pitty is ſuppoſed to ordain a *Mediator*, his own Son, God and Man, between *himſelf* and his *Laps'd Creature*, who by the Sacrifice of himſelf ſhould effect two things, anſwerable to the double Neceſſity of Man, firſt make Repentance available, which otherwiſe would not have been ſo; and ſecondly Merit Grace for him that he might be able to *Repent*. And this is what we are to underſtand by the *Reſtoration* or *Redemption* of Man, which thus far is *Univerſal* and *Inconditionate*.

XIII.

But ſtill notwithſtanding all that this *Mediator* has done for him, Man is ſuppoſed only ſo far *reſtored*, as to be put in a Pardonable and Reconcilable State (for as for our being *actually* and *immediately* reconciled by the Death of Chriſt, that's a ſilly, fond, *Antinomian* conceit, and no way conſiſtent with the

the *Great Myſtery* of *Godlineſs*) I ſay Man is yet only in a *Capacity* or Poſſibility of Pardon and Reconciliation, which is then, and then only reduced to *act*, when he actually performs the *Conditions* of Reconciliation, when he Believes, Repents and leads a good Life, *with* which he *may*, and *without* which he *ſhall not* be Pardon'd and Saved, notwithſtanding that Chriſt has Dy'd for him. The deſign of whoſe Death was not to make a good Life *unneceſſary*, but only to render it *Efficacious* and Available, not to procure a Priviledge of being ſaved *without* it (as ſome fancy) but that we might be Saved *with it*. If this Qualification be wanting, we ſhall be ſo far from being any thing *advantaged* from the Redemption purchas'd by our Mediator, that we ſhall be *Accountable* for it, to the great aggravation both of our Guilt and Miſery. It therefore highly concerns Man to improve with all diligence this ſhort and only opportunity

tunity of *Making* his *Great Fortune*, to adorn his mind with all Moral and Religious Perfections, and his Life with all good actions, ſince with this he *may* be Happy in all his capacities, and without it he ſhall not only fall into a ſtate of unutterable Miſery, but be alſo accountable for the *Poſſibility* he had of *eſcaping* it, for neglecting ſo great Salvation, ſo great an *Opportunity* of being ſaved.

XIV.

Theſe things being Premiſed concerning the preſent *Hypotheſis* or ſtate of Man, Firſt, that he can there know but very *little*, Secondly, that even that little Knowledge which he can attain to ſerves more to his Trouble than Satisfaction, and ſo is not only *Vanity*, but alſo *Vexation* of Spirit. Thirdly, that ſuppoſing it as Pleaſant as may be, yet ſuch is the ſhortneſs and incumbrance of his Life, that the enjoyment of it is not anſwerable to the Labour of acquiring it.

Fourthly, that there is no Neceſſity of ſuch a deal of Learning and Knowledge, either as to this World, or to the next, and that e're long he ſhall have his fill of Knowledge in the Beatifick Viſion of the *Ideal World*, one glance whereof ſhall inſtruct him more, than an Eternal poring upon all the Books in this, and *undiſtinguiſh* the greateſt *Doctor* from the moſt ignorant Peaſant. Fifthly, that there is an Abſolute Neceſſity of his being *Good* and *Vertuous*, this being the condition not only of his Happineſs in general, but alſo of the accompliſhment of his *Underſtanding* in particular. And that Now is the only opportunity for it. Sixthly, and laſtly, that the Attainment of Happineſs and Intellectual Perfection upon this Condition was the Purchaſe of his Saviours Death, who has alſo Merited *Grace* for his aſſiſtance in the Performance of it. Which if he neglect, he ſhall not only miſs of Happineſs, but be alſo

alſo anſwerable for ſo *Great* and ſo *Dear* an opportunity of gaining it; From theſe Premiſes 'twill I think follow with no leſs than *Mathematical Evidence.*

XV.

Firſt, that *Learning* and *Knowledge* is not the thing for which God deſign'd Man in this Station, nor conſequently the *End* or Reaſon of his beſtowing upon him thoſe intellectual and Rational Powers which he has. For had this been the End and Deſign of God he would have made it more *Poſſible* for him, and withal more his *Intereſt* and *Concern*, to attain it.

Secondly, 'twill follow that the End for which God intended Man here, and the Reaſon why he made him a Rational Creature, was that he might Live vertuouſly and well, *ſo* ſerve him here, that he might be rewarded with Happineſs and *perfect Knowledge* hereafter; Having furniſh'd him with Intellectual abilities ſufficient for *this*, tho not

for the *other*. Thirdly and laſtly, 'twill follow that the Principal care and concern of Man both becauſe of his *own intereſt*, and out of compliance with the *Deſigns* of God, ought to be to Live a good and regular Life, to accompliſh the *Moral* part of his Nature, to ſubdue his Paſſions, to rectifie his Love, to ſtudy Purity of Heart and Life, in one word, to *perfect Holineſs in the fear of God*, and (which is what we have been hitherto inquiring after) that he ought to buſy himſelf in the Study of Learning and Knowledge no further, than as 'tis conducive to the Intereſt of *Religion* and *Vertue*.

XVI.

This therefore is the *Meaſure* to be obſerv'd in our proſecution of Learning and Knowledge. We are to *Study* only that we may be *good*, and conſequently ought to proſecute ſuch Knowledge only as has an aptneſs to make us ſo, that which the Apoſtle calls *the Truth, which is after Godlineſs*. For that's the

the only buſineſs we have to do in this World. Whatever Knowledge we proſecute beſides this, or further than 'tis conducive to this end, tho it be *abſolutely* conſider'd, never ſo excellent and Perfective of our Rational part, yet with *reſpect* to the preſent Poſture and Station of Man, 'tis a Culpable Curioſity, and an unaccountable Vanity, and only a more Solemn and laborious way of being *Idle* and *Impertinent*.

XVII.

And this will be found (if well examin'd) to be nothing different from the cenſure of the Wiſe Preacher. *And I gave my heart to to know Wiſdom*, ſays he, *and I perceiv'd that this alſo is vanity and vexation of Sprit*. Not that he now firſt applied himſelf to the ſtudy of Wiſdom. No, he had been inſpired with that before, and and by the help of it had diſcover'd the vanity of all other things. But that Wiſdom which ſaw through all other things, did not as yet perceive the Vanity of it ſelf. He

therefore now gave his Heart to *Know* Wiſdom, that is, to reflect upon it, and Conſider whether this might be excepted from his general cenſure, and ſtruck out of the Scroll of vanities. And upon deep reflection he found that it could not, and that even *this* alſo was as much a vanity as any of the reſt. Now this Propoſition of *Solomon*'s cannot be underſtood *Abſolutely* (Knowledge being an undoubted Perfection of Human Nature) but only with reſpect to the preſent poſture of Man in this World. Neither can it be underſtood of *all* kind of Knowledge even in *this* Life, ſome kind of Knowledge being neceſſary to qualifie him for Happineſs in the next. It muſt therefore Neceſſarily be underſtood of all *that* Knowledge which contributes not to that great End. So that from theſe two Neceſſary Limitations the ſenſe of *Solomon*'s Propoſition (if it have any) muſt be this; that to Man in this preſent juncture all

Knowledge

Knowledge that does not Contribute to the intereſt of his After-ſtate, is downright *Vanity* and *Vexation* of Spirit.

XVIII.

For, to what purpoſe ſhould we Study *ſo much*, conſidering that after all we are able to *Know ſo little*, conſidering that even that *little* is enough to trouble and diſquiet us, conſidering that our Life is as much too ſhort for the enjoying what Knowledge we *have*, as for compaſſing what we *would* have, and withal conſidering that there lies no manner of Obligation or Neceſſity upon us to do thus. But (which is what I would moſt of all inculcate) to what purpoſe imaginable ſhould we be ſo buſy, and vehement in the purſuit of Learning, of any Learning, but what is of uſe to the Moral Conduct of our Life, conſidering theſe two things, Firſt, that 'tis but to ſtay a little while and we ſhall have all that Knowledge *Gratis*, from the Com-

munications of the *Ideal World*, which we ſo *unſucceſsfully drudge* for here, to the neglect of more important and concerning exerciſes. And Secondly, conſidering that there is ſuch an abſolute neceſſity of being *Good*, and of *Living well*, and that this ſhort uncertain Life is the only time for it, which if neglected, this great work muſt lie undone for ever? Upon the *former* conſideration this *Studious*, *Bookiſh* humour is like laying out a great Sum of Money to purchaſe an Eſtate which after one weak, *dropping* Life will of Courſe fall into hand. And I am ſure he would be reckon'd *Fool* or *Mad* that ſhould do ſo. And upon the *latter*, 'tis as if a Man that was Riding Poſt upon Buſineſs of *Life* and *Death*, ſhould as he paſſes through a Wood, ſtand ſtill to liſten to the Singing of a *Nightingale*, and ſo forget the main and only buſineſs of his Journey.

XIX.

XIX.

'Tis moſt certain that the two Caſes here ſuppoſed, are as great inſtances of Folly and Impertinence as can well be conceiv'd, and yet (however it comes to paſs that we are not ſenſible of it) 'tis certain that they are very applicable to the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life as 'tis generally managed. And tho we are all ready enough to call ſuch men Fools as ſhall do as in the two mention'd inſtances is ſuppoſed, yet 'tis moſt certain that we do the very ſame or worſe, that we are too much concern'd in the *Application* of the *Parable*, and that of moſt of *us* it may be truly ſaid, *Thou art the Man.*

XX.

For I demand, what difference is there between him that now labours and toils for Learning and Knowledge, which in a little time he ſhall be *eaſily* and *fully* poſſeſt of, and him that dearly buys an eſtate which would otherwiſe come to him

him after a ſhort interval? what difference is there, but only this, that he that buys the eſtate, tho he might have *ſpared* his Money, yet however he *gets* what he laid out his Money for; his expence indeed was *needleſs*, but not in *vain*. Whereas he that drudges in the purſuit of Knowledge, not only *toils* for that which in a ſhort time he ſhall have with *eaſe*, and in *abundance*, but which after all he *can't compaſs* in any conſiderable meaſure, and ſo undergoes a *vain* as well as *unneceſſary* Labour. And is therefore the *greater Fool*.

XXI.

Again I demand, what difference is there between him who when he is imploy'd upon buſineſs of Life and Death ſhall alight from his Horſe, and ſtand Idling to hear a *Nightingale* Singing in the Wood, and him who having an Eternity of Happineſs to ſecure by the right ordering of his Life and Manners, and having only this *Point* of time

to

to do it in, ſhall yet turn *Vertuoſo*, and ſet up for Learning and *Curioſity*. 'Tis true indeed the *Nightingale* Sings well, and 'twere worth while to ſtand ſtill and hear him, were I diſingaged from more concerning affairs, but not certainly when I am upon Life and Death. And ſo Learning and Knowledge are excellent things, and ſuch as would deſerve my Study, and my Time, had I any to *ſpare*, and were more at leiſure, but not certainly when I have ſo great an intereſt as that of my final ſtate depending upon the good uſe of it. My Buſineſs *now*, is not to be *Learned*, but to be *good*.

XXII.

For is my Life ſo long, am I ſo *over-ſtock'd* with Time, or is my depending intereſt ſo little, or is it ſo eaſily Secured, that I can find leiſure for *unneceſſary Curioſities*? Is this Conduct agreeable to the preſent ſtation and Poſture of Man, whoſe entrance into this World, and

and whoſe whole ſtay in it, is purely in order to another ſtate? Or would any one imagin this to be the condition of Man *by* ſuch a Conduct! Shall a Priſoner who has but a few days allow'd him to make a Preparation for his Trial, ſpend that little opportunity in *Cutting* and *Carving*, and ſuch like *Mechanical Contrivances*? Or would any one imagin ſuch a Man to *be* in ſuch a Condition, near a doubtful Trial of Life and Death, whom coming into a Priſon he finds ſo imploy'd? And yet is there any thing more Abſurd and Impertinent in this, than in the preſent Suppoſition, than to have a Man who has ſo great a Concern upon his Hands as the Preparing for Eternity, all buſy and taken up with *Quadrants*, and *Teleſcopes*, *Furnaces*, *Syphons* and *Air-Pumps*?

XXIII.

When we would expoſe any Signal Impertinence, we commonly illuſtrate it by the Example of *Archimedes*,

Archimedes, who was buſy in making Mathematical Figures on the Sands of *Syracuſe* while the City was taking by *Marcellus*, and ſo though there were Particular Orders given for his ſafety, loſt his Life by his *unſeaſonable Study*. Now I confeſs there was impertinence and abſurdity enough in this inſtance to conſign it over to Poſterity. But had *Archimedes* been a *Chriſtian*, or otherwiſe aſſured of the great concerns of another World, I ſhould have ſaid, that the Main of his Impertinence did not lie *here*, in being Mathematically imploy'd when the Enemy was taking the City, but in laying out his Thoughts and Time upon ſuch an inſignificant unconcerning Study, while he had no leſs a concern upon him than the ſecuring his Eternal Intereſt. Which muſt be done now or never. Nothing certainly is an *Impertinence*, if this be not, to hunt after Learning and Knowledge in ſuch a *juncture* as this.

XXIV.

Sure I am, and your *Ladyſhip* too very well knows, that many other Proceedings in the Conduct of Life are condemn'd of Vanity and Impertinence upon the very ſame grounds, tho not half ſo inconſiſtent with the Character of Man, nor ſo diſagreeable to his preſent Poſture in this World, For is not the World full of invectives, and have not the Pens of *Moral Writers* been all along imploy'd againſt thoſe that apply themſelves to Secular acquirements, ſpend their ſhort and uncertain Lives, which ought to be imploy'd in the Purſuit of an infinitely higher Intereſt, in gaping up and down after Honours and Preferments, in long and frequent attendances at Court, in raiſing Families, getting Eſtates and the like? Theſe things I ſay and ſuch like are condemn'd and cenſured not only upon the ſtock of their *particular* Viciouſneſs, as Crimes of *Ambition* or *Covetouſneſs* reſpectively,

reſpectively, but for what they have in *Common*, as they are miſpendings of Time, and unconcerning *Excentrical* imployments.

XXV.

But now I would fain know, whether any of theſe *Miſconducts* of Life be more expenſive of our Time, more remote and alien from the main buſineſs of it, more *unrelating* to our Grand Concern, and conſequently more *Impertinent*, than to be buſily imploy'd in the Niceties and Curioſities of Learning: And whether a Man that loiters away *Six Weeks* in *Court-Attendances* for a place of Honour, be not every whit as *accountably* imploy'd with reſpect to the *End* of Man in the *other* World, and his *Buſineſs* in *this*, as he that ſhall ſpend ſo much time in the Solution of a *Mathematical Queſtion*, as *M. Deſcrates* I remember confeſſes of himſelf in one of his *Epiſtles*. And why then the Proſecution of Learning ſhould be the *only* thing *excepted* from the Vanities

Vanities and Impertinencies of Life I have not head enough to underſtand.

XXVI.

And yet ſo it is. All other Excentrical unconcerning Occupations are cried down meerly for being ſo, as not according with the preſent Character and State of Man. This alone is not contented with the reputation of *Innocence*, but ſtands for *poſitive merit* and *excellence*, for Praiſe and Commendation. To ſay a Man is a Lover of Knowledge, and a diligent inquirer after Truth, is almoſt as great an *Encomium* as you can give him, and the time ſpent in the *Study*, tho in the ſearch of *unedifying* Truth, is reckon'd almoſt as *laudably* beſtow'd as that in the *Chapel*, and (ſo inconſiſtent with its ſelf is Human Judgment) 'tis Learning only that is *allow'd* not only to *divide*, but to *devour* the greateſt part of our ſhort Life, and is the only thing that with *Credit* and

Public

Public allowance ſtands in Competition with *Religion* and the ſtudy of Vertue. Nay, by the moſt is preferr'd before it, who would rather be counted *Learned*, than *Pious*.

XXVII.

But is not this a ſtrenge and unreaſonable Competition? It muſt indeed be confeſs'd that the Perfection of Man is *double*, of the Intellectual as well as of the Moral Part, and that Knowledge is a very *Divine* Excellence. But certainly *Rectitude* of *Will* is a greater Ornament and Perfection than *Brightneſs* of *Underſtanding*, and to be *Good* is more *Divine* than to be *Wiſe* and *Knowing*, that being the *Principal*, perhaps *only* difference between an *Angel* and a *Devil*. And tho *Solomon*'s Choice be univerſally applauded, yet I think that of *Mary* is to be preferr'd before it, and (to uſe the Expreſſion of the Excellent *Monſieur Poiret*) that *'tis better like an Infant without much reaſoning to Love much, than like the* Devil

Cogitat. Ration. de Deo. p. 621.

Devil to Reaſon much without Love.

XXVIII.

But ſuppoſe *Knowledge* were a much Diviner excellence than 'tis, ſuppoſe it were more Perfective of, and Ornamental to Human Nature than the *Habit* and *Practice* of Vertue, yet ſtill this Competition would be utterly againſt Reaſon. For 'tis to be conſiderd (as I have already ſuggeſted) that the Former we can't have now in any *Meaſure*, and ſhall have it hereafter *without Meaſure*, but the latter we may have now (for we may *Love* much tho we can't *know* much) and cannot have it hereafter. Now the Queſtion is, whether we ought to be more Solicitious for that *Intellectual Perfection* which we can't have here, and ſhall have hereafter, or for that *Moral Perfection* which we may have here, and cannot hereafter? And I think we need not conſult an Oracle, or conjure up a Spirit to be reſolv'd of this Queſtion.

XXIX.

XXIX.

And this one *Solitary* Conſideration (much more in Conjunction with the other parts of the *Human Character*) I take to be ſufficient to juſtifie the Truth of what *meaſure* we have preſcribed to our Intellectual Conduct, that we ought to proſecute Learning and Knowledge no further than as 'tis conducive to the great Ends of Piety and Vertue. And conſequently that when ever we ſtudy to any other Purpoſe, or in any other Degree than this, we are unaccountably impertinently, I may add *Sinfully* imploy'd. For this is the *whole of Man, to fear God and keep his Commandments*, the whole of Man in *this* Station, and conſequently this ought to be the only *Scope* of all his *Studys* and *Endeavours*. Eccleſ. 12. 13.

XXX.

And accordingly 'tis obſervable that the Scripture whenever it makes mention of *Wiſdom* with any mark of *Commendation*, it always means by it either the very Practice

of Religion and Vertue, or *ſuch* Knowledge at leaſt, that has a near and ſtrong influence upon it; thereby implying that that is the only Wiſdom which becomes the ſtudy of Man. Remarkable above the reſt to this purpoſe is the 28th Chapter of *Job*, where having run through ſeveral inſtances of
V. 12. *Natural Knowledge*, at length ſays he, *But where ſhall Wiſdom be found? And where is the place of underſtanding?* As much as to ſay that in none of the other things mention'd did conſiſt the Wiſdom of *Man.*
V. 13. Then it follows, *Man knoweth not the Price thereof, neither is it found*
V. 14. *in the Land of the Living, The Depth ſaith, it is not in me, and the*
V. 21. *Sea ſaith it is not in me.* Not in the Depths of Learning, nor in the Receſſes of Speculation, *ſeeing it* is hid from the Eyes of *all Living, and kept cloſe from the Fowls of the Air*, from Men of high and
V. 22. Towring Notions, and ſublime Theories. *Deſtruction and Death ſay, we have heard the Fame thereof*

with

with our Ears. As much as to ſay, that after this Life, and then only, unleſs perhaps about the hour of Death, Men begin to have a true ſenſe and Lively Savoury Reliſh of this Wiſdom. But in the mean time, *God underſtandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. And unto Man he ſaid, behold the Fear of the Lord that is Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil, that is underſtanding.* To *Man* he ſaid. Had it been to another Creature, ſuppoſe an *Angel*, in a ſtate of Security and Confirmation, he would perhaps have recommended for Wiſdom the Study of Nature, and the Curioſities of Philoſophy, but having to do with *Man*, a *Probationary* and *unfixt* Creature, that ſhall be either Happy or Miſerable according as he demeans himſelf in this ſhort time of Trial, the only Wiſdom he adviſes to *ſuch* a Creature in *ſuch* a Station, is to look well to his *Moral Conduct*, to ſtudy Religion and good Life. V. 23. V. 28.

XXXI.

And now (*Madam*) ſince we are upon *Scripture-Authority* (for indeed ſo little has this matter been conſider'd, that I have ſcarce any other to follow) will your *Ladyſhip* give me leave in further Confirmation of the *Meaſure* propos'd, to commend to your Conſideration two great *Scripture-Examples*, both of Men Eminently Wiſe, and of a Learned Education. The Men I inſtance in are *Moſes* and St. *Paul*. The latter of which profeſſedly declares that he *determin'd to know nothing, but Jeſus Chriſt and him Crucify'd*, that is, nothing but what concerns either the Faith or the Practice of Chriſtianity. And the former complaining of the groſs Ignorance of the People committed to his charge, and deſiring they would become wiſer, breaks out into this Paſſionate Wiſh, *O that they were Wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter End.*

1 Cor. 2.

Deut. 32. 29.

XXXII.

XXXII.

Moſes had been bred a *Scholar*, as well as a *Courtier*, and was well inſtructed in all the Secrets of the *Egyptian* Philoſophy, which was then the beſt in the World. Beſides, he was himſelf a wiſe Man, a Man that beſides the advantages of *Pharaoh*'s Court, had the Divine Λόγος himſelf for his Tutor, and convers'd perſonally with his maker, and therefore muſt needs be ſuppoſed to know what was true Wiſdom. But now this he does not make to conſiſt either in the Accompliſhments of Courtly Education, or in the deep Myſteries of Philoſophy, but in the conſideration of our latter End. He wiſhes that his People were *Wiſe*, and to this End he does not wiſh that they were as *Well-bred* as he, or as *Learned* as he, but only that they underſtood this, this one thing, that they would conſider their latter End. Which he makes the Summary and Abſtract of all Wiſ-

dom. Much like that of *Plato*, when he defines Philoſophy to be, *The Theory of Death.*

XXXIII.

And here, if your *Ladyſhip* will diſpence with a ſhort digreſſion, a digreſſion from the *immediate Thred* of my Diſcourſe, tho not from the *general Deſign* of it, I would upon this occaſion briefly repreſent to you what an excellent part of Wiſdom it is for man ſeriouſly to conſider his latter end. To make this diſtinctly appear, I ſhall proceed upon theſe two grounds: Firſt, That the Conſideration of Death is the moſt proper exerciſe that a wiſe man can be employ'd about. And Secondly, that this is the moſt compendious way of making him wiſe that is not ſo.

XXXIV.

And Firſt, it is the moſt proper exerciſe that a wiſe man can employ himſelf about. For Wiſdom conſiſts in a due eſtimation of things;

things; and then things are duly eſtimated, when they are meaſured and rated, firſt as they are *abſolutely* in *themſelves*; and ſecondly, as they ſtand in *Relation* to *us*. If they are great and extraordinary then they deſerve to be conſider'd for *their own* ſakes; and if they nearly relate to us, then they deſerve to be conſider'd for *ours*. And upon both theſe accounts, Death and its conſequences are highly deſerving a wiſe mans Thoughts and Reflections.

XXXV.

For firſt, they are great and extraordinary Tranſactions, barely as in themſelves conſider'd, and as ſuch would deſervedly ingage the moſt attentive conſideration, even of a ſtander by, of any other *indifferent* Being, ſuppoſe an *Angel*, that can be no otherwiſe concerned in it, than as tis a *great Event*, a *Noble Scene* of Providence, a matter of *Wonder* and *Curioſity*. I ſay upon this ſingle Account Death with

with its conſequences is as fit a ſubject for the Contemplation of a Wiſe man as any in *Nature*.

XXXVI.

Or if there be within the Sphere of *Nature* things of a greater and more *Bulky* appearance, yet certainly there is nothing wherein man is ſo nearly concern'd, ſo highly intereſſed as in Death. Since upon the manner of this depends his Eternal *Happineſs* or *Ruin*. There is therefore nothing that ſo much deſerves to be conſider'd by him. Whether therefore we regard the Abſolute greatneſs of the thing, or its Relative greatneſs with reſpect to us, as we are intereſſed and concerned in it, but eſpecially if we weigh *both*, the conſideration of Death is as proper an Exerciſe as a Wiſe man can be imploy'd about.

XXXVII.

And as 'tis ſo fit an imployment for him that is wiſe already, ſo ſecondly is it the moſt compendious way of making him wiſe, truly wiſe,

wiſe, that is not ſo. For all wiſdom is in Order to *Happineſs*, and to be truly wiſe, is to be *Wiſe unto Salvation*. Whatever Knowledge contributes not to this, is quite beſide the Mark, and is as the Apoſtle calls it, *Science falſly ſo called*. The Knowledge it ſelf is *vain*, and the Study of it is *impertinent*.

XXXVIII.

Now the only way to Happineſs is a good life, and conſequently all wiſdom being in Order to Happineſs, that's the only wiſdom that ſerves to the promoting of good life, according to that of *Job* before cited, *And to man he ſaid, behold the fear of the Lord that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil is underſtanding*. That therefore is the moſt compendious way of making a man *wiſe*, that ſooneſt makes him *good*, and reduces his mind to a *moral* Regularity. And nothing does this ſo ſoon and ſo well as the ſerious and habitual conſideration of Death. And therefore ſays the wiſe

wise man, *Remember Death and Corruption, and keep the Commandments.* The shortest Compendium of Holy living that ever was given. As if he had said, Many are the Precepts and Admonitions left us by wise and good men, for the moral Conduct of life, but would you have a *short* and infallible *Directory* of living well? why, remember *Death* and *Corruption*; Do but remember this, and forget all other *Rules* if you *will*, and your *Duty* if you *can*.

XXXIX.

And what is here remarked by *one* wise man is consented to by *all*. Hence those common Practises among the Antients of placing Sepulchres in their Gardens, and of using that celebrated Motto, *Memento Mori.* Hence also that Modern as well as Antient Custom of putting *Emblems* of *Mortality* in *Churches*, and other *Public* places, by all which tis implied that the Consideration of Death, is the greatest

greateſt ſecurity of a good life. As indeed it muſt be upon this general ground, becauſe it does that at a *Blow*, which other conſiderations do by *Parts*, and gives an entire defeat to the three great Enemies of our Salvation at once. It ſets us above the Temptations of the *World* the *Fleſh*, and the *Devil*. For how can the World captivate him, who conſiders he is but a ſtranger in it, and that he muſt ſhortly leave it! How can the Fleſh inſnare him who has his Sepulchre always in his Eye, and reflects upon the *cold* lodging he ſhall have there! And how can the Devil prevail upon him, who remembers always he muſt *dye*, and then enter upon an unchangeable State of Happineſs or Miſery, according as he has either *reſiſted* or *yeilded* to *his* Temptations! Of ſo vaſt conſequence is the conſtant Thinking upon Death above all other things that fall within the compaſs even of *uſeful* and *Practical* Meditation, and ſo great Reaſon

ſon had *Moſes* for placing the Wiſdom of Man in the *Conſideration* of his *latter End*.

XL.

But to return (if being ſtill in purſuit of my general deſign, I may well be ſaid to be out of the way) I now perſwade my ſelf that from the Character I have drawn of Man and his preſent Circumſtances, together with thoſe Reflections built upon it, and interwoven with it, and laſtly from *Divine Authority*, the meaſure we have given is ſo well Eſtabliſh'd, that if your *Ladyſhip* be not yet, you ought to be convinc'd that however Naturally deſirous we may be of Knowledge, yet that *this Appetite* is to be govern'd as well as thoſe that are *Senſual*; that we ought to indulge it only ſo far as may tend to the Moralizing our Souls, and the conducting our Lives, and the fitting us for that Happineſs which God has promiſed not to the *Learned*, but to the *Good*. And

that

that if it be gratify'd to any other *purpoſe*, or in any other *Meaſure* than this, our Curioſity is impertinent, our ſtudy immoderate, and the *Tree* of *Knowledge* ſtill a *forbidden Plant*.

XLI.

And now (*Madam*) having fix'd and Stated the Meaſure of our preſent Affection to, and Inquiry after Learning and Knowledge, which I think is Eſtabliſh'd upon irrefutable Principles, I may leave it to your *Ladyſhip* to conſider how much 'tis obſerv'd in the general Conduct of our Studies. 'Tis plain that 'tis not obſerv'd at all. For theſe two things are too Notorious to need any more for their Proof than only to look abroad into the World. Firſt, that very little of that which is generally made the ſubject of Study has any manner of Tendency to Living well here, or Happily hereafter. And Secondly, that theſe very ſtudies which have no Religious or Moral influence upon Life,

Life, do yet devour the greateſt part of it. The *Beſt* and *Moſt* of our Time is devoted to *Dry-Learning*; this we make the *Courſe* of our Study, the reſt is only by the *by*, and 'tis well if what is Devotional, Practical or Divinely-reliſhing, can find us at leiſure upon a Broken piece of a *Sunday* or *Holiday*. But the Main *Current* of our Life *runs* in Studies of another Nature, that don't ſo much as glance one *kind* Aſpect upon good living, 'tis well if ſome of them dont hinder it. I am ſure *St. Auſtin* thought ſo, and makes it part of his *Penitentials*. And yet to theſe our youth is dedicated, in theſe we imploy our riper years; nor do we ſee the vanity and impertinence of it in old Age. And then when we dye, this very thing makes one great part of our *Funeral Elegy*, that we were ſo diligent and indefatigable in our ſtudies, and ſo inquiſitive in the ſearch of Knowledge, perhaps that we procured an *early interment* by it, when according

Confeſſ. Lib. c. 1. 16.

according to the Principles before laid down, we were as impertinently imploy'd all the while, as if we had been ſo long picking Straws in *Bedlam*. I ſay as *impertinently*, tho perhaps not ſo *innocently*. The Sum of all comes to this: The meaſure of proſecuting Learning and Knowledge is their uſefullneſs to good Life. Conſequently all Proſecution of it beyond or beſide this End is impertinent and immoderate. This has been fully proved by evident Principles. But now of this ſort is the general proſecution of Learning and Knowledge, as is plain by appealing to the general Conduct of Study. The Concluſion therefore unovoidably follows. That the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life is juſtly chargeable with an immoderate and impertinent purſuit of Knowledge. Which was the Propoſition to be made out, and I am *ſorry* to ſee it ſo *well* proved.

The End of the Third Reflection.

The Concluſion.

AND now (Madam) having finiſh'd my *Threefold Reflection* upon the Intellectual Conduct of Human Life, I have a double Application to make, one to your *Ladyſhip*, and another to *my ſelf*. That to your Ladyſhip is this, that you would conſider to what a narrow compaſs, by vertue of the preceding Diſcourſes, theſe three things are reduced, which before uſe to take up ſo large a room, *viz. Learning it ſelf, the Method of Learning, and the Deſire and Proſecution of Learning*. The firſt of which is comprized within the Limits of *Neceſſary Truth*, the ſecond within thoſe of *Thinking*, *Purity* and *Prayer*; the third within its *uſefulneſs* to the *furtherance* of *good life*. Theſe indeed are great *retrenchments*, but I think ſuch as are juſt and neceſſary to the Regulation of our Intellectual

lectual Conduct, which I am glad to find ſo compendious and diſincumber'd, that being a Mark of no ſmall Probability to confirm me in the Truth of it, as the *Right eſt Line* is alſo always the *Shorteſt*.

And ſince both *Learning* it ſelf, its *Method*, and limits of *Proſecution* are all ſo reduced, I would further commend to your *Ladyſhip's* conſideration, whether from this great *Abridgment* you can forbear deducing theſe two *Corollaries*, firſt, that this *Bookiſh* Humour which every where ſo prevails, is one of the *Spiritual Dyſcraſys*, or *Moral Diſeaſes* of Mankind, one of the moſt *Malignant* Reliques of Original depravation. It carrying in it the very *Stamp* and *Signature* of *Adam's* Tranſgreſſion, which owed its birth to Curioſity, and inordinate deſire of Knowledge. Secondly, that thoſe who *have Eyes*, may in a great Meaſure *ſpare* them, and that thoſe who *have not*, ſhould not, upon the account of Learning,

much *lament* the *want* of them which is what particularly concerns your *Ladyſhip*'s caſe, and is now addreſs'd to your *Private* Conſiderarion.

Now as to my own *particular* Concern, the Reſult of what I have written is this. I am ſo *inwardly* and *throughly* convinc'd of the certainty of thoſe Principles, I have here lay'd down, that I think I am not only under a particular *Obligation*, but almoſt under a *Neceſſity* of conducting my ſtudies according to the Meaſures propoſed. The *laſt* of which has left ſuch a ſtrong influence, ſuch a deep impreſſion upon me, that I think I ſhall now follow the Advice of the Heathen (*M. Antonius* as I remember) τὴν ἀπὸ βιβλίων δίψαν ἀπόθου, *rid my ſelf of the Thirſt after Books*, and ſtudy nothing but what ſerves to the advancement of Piety and good life.

I have now ſpent about Thirteen years in the moſt celebrated Univerſity

Univerſity in the World, and, according to the ordinary Meaſures, perhaps not amiſs, having accompliſh'd my ſelf in a competent degree both with ſuch Learning as the *Academical Standard* requires, and with whatever elſe my own *Private Genius* inclined me to. But truly I cannot ſay that I have order'd my ſtudies in *that Theatre of Learning*, ſo much to my *own Satisfaction*, as to my *Reputation* with *others*. To be free with you, I muſt declare, that when I reflect upon my paſt *Intellectual Conduct*, I am as little ſatisfy'd with it as I am with that of my *Morals*, and that I think I have nigh as much to anſwer for the *Former*, as I have for the *Latter*, being very Conſcious that the greateſt part of it has been imploy'd in *Unconcerning Curioſities*, ſuch as derive no moral influence upon the Soul that contemplates them.

But I have now (if I ſufficiently underſtand my ſelf) a very diffe-

rent Taſte and Apprehenſion of things, and intend to ſpend my *uncertain remainder* of time in ſtudying only ſuch things as make for the Moral improvement of my mind, and the Regulation of my Life, not being able to give an account upon any rational and conſiſtent Principles, why I ſhould ſtudy any thing elſe.

More *particularly* I think I ſhall cheifly apply my ſelf to the Reading of ſuch Books as are rather *Perſwaſive*, than *Inſtructive*, ſuch as are Sapid, Pathetic and Divinely-reliſhing, ſuch as Warm, Kindle and inlarge the *Interiour*, and awaken the *Divine Senſe* of the Soul, as conſidering with my ſelf that I have now, after ſo much Reading and Speculation, more need of *Heat* than of *Light*. Tho if I were for more Light ſtill, I think this would prove the beſt *Method* of *Illumination*, and that when all's done, the *Love* of God is the beſt *Light* of the Soul. For I conſider

with

with the Excellent *Cardinal Bona*, that *a Man may have Knowledge without Love. But he that Loves, altho he wants Sciences humanely acquired, yet he will know more than Human Wiſdom can teach him, becauſe he has that Maſter within who teaches Man Knowledge.* Purity of Heart and Life being one of the Methods of Conſulting the *Ideal World*, as was ſhewn in the Second Part. Via compendii ad Deum. p. 172.

And now (*Madam*) I cannot well preſage how your *Ladyſhip* will reliſh this *Renunciation* of all ſtudies *Meerly Curious*, from one whom you apprehended (perhaps upon too juſt grounds) to have been ſo naturally diſpoſed to them, and ſo deeply ingaged in them. Perhaps you'll ſay I am already *Countrify'd* ſince I left the *Univerſity*. How far that *Metamorphoſis* may ſeize upon me, I can't yet tell, if Solitude and Retirement be enough to bring it, I am I confeſs in great Danger, being now got into a

little Corner of the World, where I muſt be more Company to my ſelf than I have been ever yet. But the beſt on't is, I have not been ſo great a ſtranger to my own Company *all along*, as to fear any great *alteration* by it now. Nor do I think the Management of the Preſent undertaking a *ſign* of any ſuch *change*.

Whether I ſhould have had the ſame Thoughts in the *Univerſity* or no, I can't ſay, I rather believe they are owing to my *Country-Retirement* (as I hinted in the Beginning) but however that be, ſure I am they were entertain'd upon the deepeſt and ſevereſt Conſideration, and I believe are ſo *well grounded*, that the more your *Ladyſhip conſiders*, the more you will be convinc'd both of the *Truth* of what I have *Diſcours'd*, and of the *Reaſonableneſs* of what I *deſign*; which is to devote my ſelf wholly to the accompliſhment of my *Moral* part, and of my Intellectual, only ſo far

far as is Subſervient to the other.

And now (*Madam*) having bid farewel to all *unconcerning* Studies, all the dry and unſavoury parts of Learning, 'tis high time to take my leave of your *Ladyſhip* too; which I do with this *Hope*, that one great ground of your Trouble for the Misfortune of your Eyes is by the foregoing Conſiderations removed: And with this *Aſſurance*, that if theſe Diſcourſes be too *Weak* to bring you over to my *preſent* Opinion, they will however prove *Strong* enough to work you into a *Better*, which is to *believe*, that I ſtill continue in all Reality,

Your Ladyſhips

Moſt Faithful Friend

and Servant,

Newton St. Loe,
Sept. 2. 1689.

John Norris.

A

A SERMON

Preach'd in the

ABBY CHURCH OF BATH,

Before the

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

THOMAS,

Lord Biſhop of *BATH* and *WELLS*:

At his VISITATION held there *July* 30. 1689.

By *John Norris*, M. A. Rector of *Newton* St. *Loe*, near *Bath*, and late Fellow of *All-Souls* College in *Oxford*.

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John 21. v. 15.

So when they had Dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon Son of Jonas, Loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, yea Lord; Thou knoweſt that I Love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my Lambs.

THE Words conſiſt of Three conſiderable parts. Firſt, of a Queſtion put by our Lord to St. *Peter*. Secondly, of St. *Peter's* Anſwer. Thirdly, of a Command by way of inference from it. The Queſtion was whether St. *Peter* Loved him beyond the reſt of his Diſciples then preſent. This *De-*

mand

mand of our Lord was not ſo high as were St. *Peter's* former *Profeſſions* and *Pretenſions*. This warm and Zealous Apoſtle had always profeſs'd a more than ordinary Adheſion to his Lord and Maſter, and pretended to as great a *Supremacy* of *Love*, as his Succeſſours do of *Knowledge* and *Juriſdiction*. He ſeem'd to be among the *Apoſtles* what the *Seraphim* are among the *Angels*, to out-ſhine and out-burn not this or that vulgar Diſciple only, but the whole Apoſtolical Order in Zeal, Courage, and Flames of *Divine Love*. For no leſs can that Eminent Profeſſion of his import, *Tho all Men ſhould be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended*. But not having made good his high Pretenſions, our Lord now puts the Queſtion to him in terms more moderate than thoſe wherein he had before voluntarily boaſted of his own Fidelity; and whereas he had before made ſhew of a *Superlative* Love beyond *All* the

Mat. 26. 33.

the Diſciples, our Lord only asks him this Modeſt Queſtion, *Loveſt thou me more than theſe?*

The good Apoſtle having now partly from the late experiment of his own frailty, and partly from the manner of our Lords Queſtion, learnt more Humility and Modeſty, returns ſuch an Anſwer as was ſhort not only of his *former Profeſſions*, but even of the *Queſtion* too. He does not reply, *Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee more than theſe.* No, he dares not venture any more ſo much as to *determine* any thing concerning the *Meaſure* of his Love, but is contented barely to aver the *Truth*, and *Sincerity* of it. And for this he fears not to appeal at laſt to the *Divine Omniſcience*, *Lord thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.*

Our Lord takes the Anſwer, and does not at all queſtion the Truth and Sincerity of it, only he gives him a *Teſt* whereby it might be

be tried and juſtified, both before *God*, *himſelf* and the *World*, by ſubjoining this Illative Command, *feed my Lambs*, as it is in the Text, or as in the two following verſes, *feed my ſheep*.

This whole intercourſe between our Lord and St. *Peter*, may I conceive, as to the full ſtreſs and ſcope of it, fitly be reduced to this ſhort *Hypothetical ſceme* of ſpeech, *If thou loveſt me, feed my ſheep*. Like that of our Saviour, upon another occaſion to his Diſciples in common, *If ye love me keep my Commandments*. This under a ſhorter view takes in the full force of the words, and I ſhall accordingly diſcourſe upon them, as if they had ſtood in this Poſture.

Hence then I ſhall take occaſion to conſider theſe three things, as naturally ariſing from the words, and as no leſs pertinent to our preſent Concern.

Firſt the great Love of our Lord Chriſt

Chriſt to his Church, which he here calls *his Lambs*, and *his Sheep*, which he here commands St. *Peter* as he loved him to feed, and which laſtly he would not abſolutely and finally commit to his Charge, till after *three diſtinct Inquiries* whether he truly loved him.

Secondly, I ſhall conſider the *Command* here given, and ſhew the great obligation that lies upon all ſpiritual Paſtors and Guides of Souls to feed this flock of Chriſt which is ſo dearly beloved by him.

Thirdly, I ſhall conſider the *Connexion* and *Dependence* that is between the *Practice* of this command and the *Love* of Chriſt. *If thou Lovſt me feed my ſheep.*

Laſtly, I ſhall cloſe all with an earneſt exhortation to the Conſcientious Practice of the Duty enjoyned.

The firſt thing I ſhall conſider is the great Love of Chriſt to his Church. And certainly if there be any *Secret* in Religion fit for

Angels to *Contemplate*, and too high for them to *comprehend*; if there be any Love that has *Breadth* and *Length*, and *Depth*, and *Height*, if there be any Love that *passes Knowledge*, if there be any love that is *stronger* than *Death*, and *dearer* than *Life*, if there be any, lastly, that is *truly wonderful*, and that passes love not only of *Women*, but of the whole *Creation*, 'tis this Love of our Lord to his Church. We have no line long enough to fathom so vast a Depth, nor can Mortality furnish us with Ideas to conceive, or with words to utter so deep a Mystery. If there be any words that can reach it, they must be such as St. *Paul* heard in his Rapture, strange words, ἄῤῥητα ῥήματα words that cannot be pronounced by an Human Tongue, and that would be meer *Barbarism* to a Mortal capacity.

But however, that we may take some Measure of that which really has none, and be able to frame

some

ſome Notion of this Love of Chriſt, which as the Apoſtle tells us *paſſes knowledge*, we will exhibit a Proſpect of it in a *Double Light*; Firſt, in thoſe verbal Repreſentations which the Scripture gives of it, and Secondly, in thoſe real and actual Proofs whereby Chriſt himſelf has expreſt this his moſt excellent, and otherwiſe *Incredible* Love. Ephes. 3. 19.

As to the Firſt, the Scripture we know is full of great things, and thoſe ſet forth with as great and magnificent Expreſſions. The Rhetoric and Stile of Scripture runs incomparably high, beyond that of any other writings in whatever it treats of. But there are *three* things more eſpecially, in the deſcription of which the Holy Spirit ſeems to *Labour*, and be at a *Stand* for *Expreſſion*. And theſe are the *Glories* of *Heaven*, the *Miſeries* of *Hell*, and the *Love* of *Chriſt* to his *Church*. Theſe the Scripture repreſents under all the variety of Symbols, Figures and Images that can

be ſupplied either from the *Intellectual* or *Material* World; that ſo what is wanting in each ſingle Repreſentation, might be made up from the Multitude and Combination of them, that if one ſhould miſs, another might ſtrike us, to make if poſſible ſome impreſſion of ſo ſtrange and ſo concerning Truths upon the minds of Men.

But the laſt of theſe, as 'tis moſt wonderful and Myſterious (it being a greater wonder that God ſhould Love Man, than that either there ſhould be ſo much Happineſs in the Enjoyment of God, or ſo much miſery in the Loſs of him) ſo is it more *frequently inculcated*, and more *ſtrongly repreſented*. So frequently inculcated is it, that were it not for the *Myſtery* of the *thing*, and that there is no *Tautology* in *Love*, the Scripture would ſeem Chargeable with *vain Repetitions*. Every Page almoſt in Holy writ breathes forth this Myſtery of *Divine Love*, and beſides that, there

is

is one whole Book particularly imploy'd in the repreſentation of it, by all the Flowers and Delicacies of the moſt exalted Poetry; it may be ſaid of the whole Sacred Volumn that 'tis but one continued Expreſſion of Love from Chriſt to his Church, one *Larger Canticles*.

And as 'tis thus frequently inculcated, ſo is it no leſs ſtrongly repreſented. 'Tis repreſented by that which is the moſt proper *Effect*, and the laſt *End* and *Accompliſhment* of all Love, by *Union*. For there are three moſt admirable Unions propoſed to our Faith in the Chriſtian Religion. The Unity of Eſſence in the Trinity, the Unity of Perſon in Jeſus Chriſt, and the Union that is between Chriſt and his Church. The Firſt of theſe is an Example and Prefiguration as it were to the Second, and the Second to the Third. For we cannot better repreſent the Union of Chriſt with his Church, than by the *Hy-*

postatic Union, or the Union of the λογ☉ with Human Nature.

For First, as in this Mystery the Plurality of Nature is consistent with the Unity of Person, so does Love effect the same Miracle in the Union between Christ and his Church. For here also we meet with a new *Theanthropy*, a strange Composition of God and Man, two vastly different Substances, which without Confusion of either *Natures* or *Properties*, make up one and the same *Body*. For if Christ be *Head* of the Church, he is also one Body with it. And so St. *Austin*, *Totus Christus secundam Ecclesiam & Caput & Corpus est.*

Again, as in the Mystery of the Hypostatic union there is a Communication of Idioms or Properties whereby what primarily and abstractly belongs to one, may secondarily and concretely be attributed to the other, as that God is man, and man is God, so has Love introduced the like Communication

nication between Chriſt and his Church, which may be ſaid to be *happy* and *glorified* in Chriſt, as he is ſaid to *ſuffer* in his Church.

Again, as in the Myſtery of the Hypoſtatic union the *Word* uniting it ſelf to Human Nature adorn'd and exalted it, not only by the Priviledge of ſo ſacred a Confederacy, but alſo with many diſtinct Graces and Excellencies, whereby it was *neceſſarily* tho not *forcibly* determin'd to love the Divinity, and highly fitted to be loved by it, ſo is it alſo in this Union between Chriſt and his Church. He has not only innobled her by ſo ſacred an Alliance, but is ever conferring upon her his Giſts and Graces, and will never ceaſe to do ſo, till at length he preſent her to himſelf a *Glorious Church*, without *ſpot* or *blemiſh*, and make her in ſome meaſure worthy of ſo great a *Love*, and ſo intimate an *Union*. For 'tis obſervable, that in Scripture Jeſus Chriſt is ſet out as the Author and Ephes. 5. 27.

Diſpencer of all Grace, to him is aſcribed the Work of the *Second* as well as of the *Firſt* Creation, from his fulneſs we all receive, and the Apoſtle ſays expreſly, that *to every one of us is given grace according to the Meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.*

Ephes. 4. 7.

But not to purſue this *Metaphyſical Parallel* any further, let us return to conſider this Union, as 'tis repreſented in Holy Scripture. Now there are but two ſorts of Union in the World, *Natural* and *Moral.* And the Holy Spirit has made Choice of the cloſeſt of each, whereby to *Figure* out to us the Union between Chriſt and his Church. The cloſeſt of Natural Unions is that between the *Head* and the *Body*; and the cloſeſt of all Moral Unions is that between the *Husband* and the *Wife.* And both theſe are by the Holy Spirit applied to this Myſtery.

Thus is Chriſt oftentimes call'd the *Head* of the Church, and the Church the *Body* of Chriſt. Thus again

again is he ſtiled the *Bridegroom*, and the Church honour'd with the Name of his *Spouſe*. And becauſe this *Latter* Figure carries in it more of ſenſible endearment, therefore is it of more *frequent uſe*, and withal of more *Antient Date*. For beſides that *Adam* firſt open'd this *Myſtery*, and by his Miraculous Marriage typified to us that of Chriſt with his Church, which came out of the Wounded Side of our Lord, as *Eve* was taken out of *Adam*'s, the Prophets have alſo given our Lord the title of *Bridegroom* in the Old Teſtament. The 45th *Pſalm* is a plain Spiritual *Epithalamium*, and ſo is the whole Book of Canticles, and the Holy Baptiſt, in whom both Types and Propheſie expire, calls him expreſly by the Name of *Bridegroom*.

Strange Miracle of *Humility* and *Love*! That ever God ſhould come down to ſeek a Spouſe upon Earth! was it not enough, O Bleſſed Jeſu, that thou waſt one with the

the Father and Holy Spirit, in the Eternal Trinity? was it not enough that thou hadſt *made* thy ſelf one with our Mortal Fleſh by aſſuming our Nature, but that thou muſt yet heap Myſtery upon Myſtery, and as if thou wert not yet near enough allied to us, muſt alſo make thy ſelf one with thy *Church*? But ſuch is thy *Love* to man as not to be contented with *one* ſingle union with him? And ſo great thy *Condeſcention* as if thou need'ſt a *Partner*, to compleat thy Happineſs, and as if it were no more good for the *ſecond*, than 'twas for the *firſt Adam* to be *alone*.

Theſe are the two Principal *Figures* under which the Scripture Pictures out to us the Love of Chriſt to his Church, and his union with it. Not that they riſe up to the heighth of the Myſtery, but becauſe they come the neareſt of any to it. For indeed they fall vaſtly ſhort, and give but a faint ſhadowy reſemblance of what they are intended

ded to repreſent. And therefore as we have hitherto repreſented the dearneſs between Chriſt and his Church, by that between the *Head* and the *Members*, and the *Husband* and *Wife*, ſo we may, and with better reaſon *invert* the Order, and propoſe the *Former* as an Example and Meaſure for both the *Latter*. And 'tis obſervable that St. *Paul* does ſo; For ſays he, *Husbands love your Wives, even as Chriſt loved the Church.* And again, *No Man ever yet hated his own Fleſh, but Nouriſhes and Cheriſhes it even as the Lord the Church.* Where you ſee the Love of Chriſt to his Church is not, as before, ſet out by that of Married Perſons, and that of a Man to his own Fleſh, but theſe are ſet out and illuſtrated by the other. So great and tranſcending all *Love*, yea even all *Knowledge*, is this Love of Chriſt to his Church.

Ephes. 5. 25.

Ver. 29.

But 'twill appear yet greater, if we take a Proſpect of it in the ſecond

Second Light, namely in those Real and Actual Proofs whereby Christ himself has expreſt this his moſt excellent and otherwiſe incredible Love. And certainly they are ſuch as never *were*, *will*, or *can* be given by any other Lover. For (to make the Proſpect as ſhort as may be) was it not an amazing inſtance of Love for the great and ever Bleſſed God, who could neither be advantaged by our Happineſs, nor damaged by our Miſery, to come down and aſſume our Nature in its meaneſt Circumſtances, to live a needy and contemptible Life, and dye a painful aud execrable Death, and all this to reconcile a Rebel, to reſtore an Apoſtate? Indeed the work of Man's Redemption, if we deeply conſider the whole Method and Contrivance of it, is ſuch an Heroic inſtance of Love, and ſo much exceeding that of his Creation, that 'tis well Man was *Created* and *Redeem'd* by the *ſame* good being, ſince otherwiſe his obligations

to

to his *Redeemer* being ſo much greater than thoſe to his *Creator*, he would be very much divided and diſtracted in his returns of *Love* and *Gratitude*.

But let us reflect a little upon the *Life*, before we further conſider the *Death* of our Redeemer. It was one conſtant Argument, one continued Miracle of Love. He lived as one purely *Devoted* to the good of Mankind. All his *Thoughts*, all his *Words*, all his *Actions* were *Love*, His whole buſineſs was to *Glorify* his Father, and (which was his greateſt Glory) to expreſs his Love to Man, which tho at all times exceeding wonderful, yet toward the Evening of his Life it thicken'd and grew ſtronger, like Motion within the Neighbourhood of the Center, and as then he *Prayed*, ſo he *Loved yet more earneſtly*. Luke. 22. 44.

For 'twas then that he wept over Condemn'd *Jeruſalem*, and bedew'd with Tears the Grave of *Lazarus*.

'Twas

'Twas then that with deſire he deſired to Eat the Paſſover with his Diſciples, inſtituted a perpetual Monument of *Love*, his Holy Supper, and left another of *Humility* by condeſcending to waſh their Feet. 'Twas then that he comforted his Diſciples with the variety of the Heavenly Manſions, with a Declaration that he himſelf was the way, the Truth and the Life, with an aſſurance that their Prayers in his Name ſhould be effectual, with a Promiſe of the Holy Spirit, and with a Legacy of his own *Peace*, to compenſate for the Tribulation they ſhould meet with in the *World*. 'Twas then, laſtly, that he recommended the ſtate of his Apoſtles, together with his own Glorification, in one and the ſame Solemn Prayer to his Father, that he would preſerve them in Unity and Truth, and at length Glorify them with the whole Body of true Believers with himſelf in Heaven. And all this at a time when one would have thought

Jo. 17.

thought his own concern ſhould have been his only *Meditation*, and Fear his only *Paſſion*, for now was he within view of his amazing ſufferings, and the *ſhade* was juſt ready to *point* at the dreadful hour, and yet even now his Love was truly ſtronger than Death, and the Care of his Diſciples prevailed over the Horrors of his approaching Agony.

Which he further ſhewed by giving up himſelf to a cruel and ſhameful Death, for the Life and Salvation of the World. A Death (to ſay no more of it) of ſuch ſtrange Sorrow and Anguiſh, that the very *Proſpect* of it put him into a *Sweat* of *Blood*, and the *enduring* it made him *complain* of being *deſerted* of his Father. And then that his Redemption might prove *effectual*, after his Reſurrection he gives Commiſſion to his Diſciples to go and publiſh it with its conditions throughout the world, and orders them all, as he does here

here St. *Peter*, to *feed his Sheep*. And leſt the the Benefit of his Death ſhould be *again* fruſtrated for want of Power to perform the conditions, preſently after his Aſcenſion he ſent down the Spirit of conſolation upon his Apoſtles, and does continually confer *Grace* upon, and make *Interceſſion* for his Church. So tenderly affected was he toward this his Spouſe, that even the felicities of Heaven could not make him forget her, as he further ſhew'd by complaining in behalf of his Church, when from the midſt of his Glory he ſaid, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Which words ſhew him as much concern'd for the wounds given to his *Myſtical*, as for thoſe he felt in his *Natural* Body.

And now ſince the Love of our Lord to his Church is ſo exceeding great, it certainly concerns all Chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe whom he has intruſted with the Care of his Church to be alike minded.

Which

Which leads me in the Second place to consider the command here given, and to shew the great Obligation that lies upon all spiritual Pastors, to feed this flock of Christ which is so nearly beloved by him.

Feed my sheep, says our Lord to St. *Peter*, and in him to all the Pastors of the Christian Church, who are equally concerned both in the *Command* and in the *Duty*.

And that they are so is, already sufficiently concluded from what has been discoursed concerning the great Love of Christ to his Church. To make you therefore more sensible of this Duty I need only propose to your Meditation, "how affectionately our Lord "loves his Church, and how dear "her Interests are to him, that out "of this his abundant Love, he has "set apart a distinct Order of men "on this very purpose, to promote "and further her in the way of "Salvation, that he has intrusted

" the care of her in their hands,
" and has made them his Vice-
" gerents and Truſtees; that 'tis
" a Charge worthy their greateſt
" care, for which there needs no
" other Argument than that 'tis
" committed to them, by him who
" knows the worth of Souls; that
" he ſtrictly commands them, as
" they have any Love or Regard
" for him, to feed his Sheep; that
" 'twas the very laſt Command
" that he gave them, when he was
" juſt leaving the world, and upon
" the very confines of Glorificati-
" on, and that laſtly as this is the
" greateſt Truſt that was ever by
" God repoſed in Men, ſo there will
" be the ſevereſt account taken of it
" at the laſt day, at the Great *Viſi-*
" *tation* of the *Biſhop of Souls.*

This is enough, if duely weighed, to ſhew the Obligation of this command, and to conclude this part, were it not neceſſary to add ſomething concerning the manner of diſcharging it. *Feed my Sheep*

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is the Command given by Christ to the Pastors of his Church, and we have seen the obligation of it: But *how* are they to Feed them? I answer, First by *Prayer* for their respective charges both in Public and in Private. This is the First thing belonging to the Pastoral Office, and accordingly with this St. *Paul* begins his Admonition to his Son *Timothy. I exhort therefore that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions and giving Thanks be made for all Men.* 1 Tim. 2. 1.

Secondly by *Preaching*, with Private Instruction and Admonition as occasion shall serve and require. And here their first care should be to Preach nothing but what is *True*. Secondly, to confine their Discourses to *Useful Truths*, such as tend to the promotion of good Life, that which the Apostle calls *the Truth which is after Godliness*. Thirdly, to deliver only *Plain Truths*. For there are many Truths which are highly useful and have a very Practical aspect when 1 Titus

they are once understood, which are not so easie and obvious to be so. These therefore ought as much to be waved as those which are not useful, because tho useful, *simply* speaking, yet *respectively* they are not. And upon these two latter accounts we should not trouble our Unlearned Auditories, either with Thorny Questions and Knotty Controversies which in themselves have no Practical use, or with more refined Theories and School Niceties, which to them are as useless and unpractical as the other. To Feed them with the *Former* would be to give them *Stones* instead of *Bread*; And to Feed them with the *Latter* would be like placing a Man in the Region of *pure Ether*; why, he can't *breath* in it, and will starve by reason of the *over-fineness* of his Diet.

Nor is it enough that the Truths we Preach be *Useful* and *Plain*, unless in the Fourth place they be deliver'd in a Plain and Intelligible *Manner*. For what signifies it that the

the things are in *themſelves* Plain, if we make them obſcure in our *expreſſing* them; we are all ready enough to laugh at the Poor *Frier* for going about to Preach the Goſpel to *Beaſts* and *Trees*, and are not they alike ridiculous that order Diſcourſes ſo as not to be underſtood by thoſe that hear them? Don't theſe alſo Preach to *Beaſts* and *Trees*? We ought therefore to conſult the *Capacity* of our Hearers, and conſider to *whom*, as well as *what* we ſpeak.

And to this Plainneſs of Expreſſion we would do well to join ſome degrees of *Warmth* and *Concernedneſs*. And this I rather recommend becauſe there are ſome that affect a Cold, Dead, careleſs and heartleſs way of Delivery. But certainly this has as little *Decorum* in it as it has of *Devotion*. For ſince the things we ſpeak are ſuppoſed not only to be *Truths*, but *Concerning* and *Important* Truths, what can be more abſurd than to ſee a Man deliver

a Sermon as drily and indifferently, as one would Read a *Mathematical Lecture*? 'Tis said of *John* the Baptist, that he was a *Burning*, as well as a *Shining* Light. And truly we have need of such in this Cold Frozen Age. Plain Sermons, Preach'd with Warmth and Affection do more than the Best, Coldly deliver'd. You know the Story in *Eusebius* of the Heathen Philosopher coming into the *Council* of *Nice*, who was baffled into Christianity by the meer *Warmth* and *Heartiness* wherewith the good Old Man address'd him. He could have resisted his Arguments, but not the Spirit and Zeal wherewith he spake. And this is all I shall think proper to remark to you upon the Preaching part.

John 5. 35.

The next way whereby the Pastors of the Church are to Feed the Sheep of Christ, is by duely Administring to them the *Holy Sacrament*, which is their true Spiritual Food, the *Manna* that must sustain them in this

this *Wilderneſs*. This is the moſt proper way of Feeding them, for the Body of Chriſt is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed.

There remains yet one way more of Feeding the Flock of Chriſt, without which the reſt will ſignifie but little, and that is by a *good Example*. Among the other Properties of a good Shepherd, our Saviour reckons this as one, that *he goes before his Sheep*, and leads them by his *Steps*, as well as with his *Voice*. There ought to be a Connexion between *Hear* and *Do*, but much more between *Preach* and *Do*. And he that is not careful of this, as he cannot expect to do much good to others, ſo he will certainly *Condemn* himſelf. To be ſhort (for I hope I need not inlarge, ſpeaking to Wiſe Men) a good Preacher who is an ill Liver is ſuch a *Monſter* as cannot be Match'd in all *Affrica*. And for his State hereafter, I may leave it to be conſider'd how great a Condemnation

John 10. 4

awaits him, whom not only the *Book* of *God*, and of *Conſcience*, but even his *own Sermons* ſhall Judge at the laſt Day.

Theſe are the ſeveral ways of diſcharging this Precept, *Feed my Sheep*; to which however I think it neceſſary to add one thing more, and that is that we Feed them *our ſelves*, and not by *Proxy*, or *Deputation*. For our Lord does not ſay to St. *Peter*, do thou get ſome body to Feed my Sheep, but do thou Feed them thy ſelf.

For however St. *Peter's Shadow* might do Cures upon the *Body*, it muſt be his *Perſon* that muſt do good upon the *Souls* of his Charge. To ſpeak out plainly what I intend, *Non-reſidency* is one of the greateſt ſcandals of the *Reform'd*, yea of the *Chriſtian* Religion, contrary to all Reaſon and Juſtice, as well as Primitive Practice. And whoever are guilty of it, plainly ſhew that they are Lovers of Eaſe, Honour or Profit more than Lovers of Chriſt.

For

For certainly he that Loves Christ as he ought will not think himself too good to Feed his Sheep. Which leads me in the Third and Last place to consider the *Connexion* and *Dependance* that is between the *Practice* of this Command and the *Love* of Christ. Now this I briefly make out upon a double ground.

The *First Ground* is, because the Love of Christ will naturally ingage us to Love whatever he Loves, and consequently since his Church is so exceeding dear to him, 'twill ingage us to Love his Church, and if to Love it, then consequently to be diligent in Feeding it, that being the most proper instance of shewing our Love to it.

The *Second Ground* is, because the Person of Jesus Christ consisting of a Double Nature, God and Man, the Love of him must include the Love of his *Humanity*; as well as of his *Divinity*. If therefore we Love Christ, we Love the Human Nature as well as the Divine,

vine, and if ſo, then we Love Man as Man, conſequently all Men, and if we Love all Men, we ſhall deſire and endeavour their Salvation, and accordingly take care to Feed them with the *Bread* of *Life*.

Upon theſe two Grounds it plainly appears that there is a ſtrong Connexion between the *Loving* of *Chriſt*, and the *Feeding* of his *Sheep*, and that ſuch Paſtors as do not well diſcharge the *Latter*, have no right of pretending to the *Former*. This is the *Teſt* whereby both St. *Peter's* and every Spiritual Paſtor's affection to our Lord muſt be tried, *If you Love me, Feed my Sheep.*

Let me therefore exhort you all, as you Love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and as you deſire to be Loved and approv'd of by him, to a ſincere and Conſcientious Diſcharge of your *Paſtoral Duty*, to *take heed unto your ſelves and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghoſt has made you*

you Overſeers, to Feed the Church of God, which he has purchaſed with his own Blood. Let me beſeech you to conſider what you *are*, and what you *ſhould be*. What you are by your *Character* and *Profeſſion*, and what you ſhould be in the *Exerciſe* of it, and therefore to take heed to *your ſelves*, to *your Doctrine*, and above all to *your Publick Life and Converſation*. For certainly it cannot be an Ordinary Meaſure of Religion that will ſerve our turn, who are concern'd not only to be *Good*, but *Exemplary*, and muſt Live well for *others* as well as for *our ſelves*, what therefore is *Perfection* in others, will be but ſtrict *Duty* in us. The Devotion of our *Ordinary* days, ought to exceed that of their *Feſtivals*, and we ſhould *Live* in as much Warmth of Religion as they *Dye*. περὶ πάντα παράδειγμα καλῶν ἔργων *In all things ſhewing thy ſelf a Pattern of good Works*, That's our Rule, we ought to

Act. 20. 28.

Tit. 2. 7.

to be Patterns and Examples of a Holy and refined Converſation. Let your Lamps therefore be always trimm'd, and your Lights always Burning, and that with ſuch *Brightneſs*, as to *ſhame* thoſe that will not be *allured* by the *Glory* of the Flame.

And that you may the better do all this, let me deſire you all frequently and ſeriouſly to Meditate upon the Excellent *Example* of the great and good Shepherd Chriſt Jeſus, whoſe Life was wholly *imploy'd*, and at laſt *laid down* for the good of his Sheep. I pray you (My Reverend Brethren) conſider this and all that has been ſaid, that ſo when this great Shepherd ſhall return to viſit his Flock, you may all give up the ſame Account to him, that he did to his Father, *Thoſe that thou gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them is loſt.* Amen.

John 17. 12.

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